

STARBURST

BARON MUNCHHAUSEN
Director
Terry Gilliam
interviewed

DOCTOR WHO
Starburst's
guide to weird
creatures



ALIEN NATION
& **CRITTERS 2**
Previewed

HIGHWAYMAN
Futuristic Law
of the Road

BUCK ROGERS
Interviewed



Alien Nation

Free Beetlejuice Videos

WIN
A SET VISIT TO
"NIGHT BREED"
AT PINEWOOD
FILM STUDIOS



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Front Cover: Artwork for The Adventures of Baron Munchausen

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Things To Come

Michael Courtland

HITCHCOCKY

Here's a name to conjure with: Karen Mayo Chandler.

Who's she, you may ask? Well, I have a feeling you won't be posing that question for much longer, if the star turn she does in a Hitchcockian-style thriller heading your way soon is anything to go by. Out of the Dark teams a splendid cast which includes the late great Divine and film director Paul Bartel (he made sides ache and stomachs churn with his splendid cannibalism comedy *Eating Raoul* a few years back) - and most rewarding of all, the lovely Miss Chandler. Or should that be Miss Mayo Chandler? Whatever, she's worth the price of your admission ticket - and she's British to boot...

You thought that having a career as a top-flight glamour photographer was all *liebtraum* milch, ladies and lullabies? Well, think again, because if you had as many problems as top lensman Zack Norman, you'd be seriously contemplating a one-way trip to that great darkroom in the sky. Mind you, every cloud has a silver lining, this time in the shape of the lovely Karen, with whom Zack is comparing more than proof sheets - although the fact that she gets bumped off by a psycho killer fifteen minutes into the movie does rather put a damper on their blossoming relationship.

As a debut effort from Michael Schroeder, *Out of the Dark* scores high numbers for sheer cinematic confidence and well-tooled visual thrills.

What lets it down - in common, of course, with so many other slasher movies with high intentions - is the script. The picture benefits from an appealingly unsavoury setting - the twilight world of phone sex - but after a promising opening hour hits nothing but a series of wrong numbers as the resting actresses and aspiring models who provide the on-line service become terror targets for a stalking psycho. In fact all told it's enough to make you think twice before you ever again consider ringing that 0698 exchange to find out more about 'Naughty Nina's Nights in the Hayloft'...

Director Schroeder (whose last picture was the splendidly-titled *Mortuary Academy*, which sounds like a school I want to) handles the action adroitly and keeps the calls coming and the exchange clicking when the whole movie threatens to collapse under the weight of some predictable plot twists - not to mention a welter of horror homages to director Brian de Palma. *Out of the Dark* comes on like a cross between *Dressed to Kill* and *Call Me* - and to be fair, it more than matches either of those movies for entertainment value. And, of course, it does have the magical Miss Mayo Chandler who positively radiates star quality. She exits stage left a little early - not to mention messily - but I guarantee you'll remember her for the rest of the film. I remembered her for the rest of the week.

FLYING HIGH

Who needs critics, anyway? Not Mel Brooks, that's for sure. I don't know about you, but I've always felt Mad Mel is much funnier in interviews than he has been in any of his movies, although I've always enjoyed the non-Mel pictures made by his Brookfilms production company, like *The Elephant Man* and *The Fly*. That record holds good with his newie, *The Fly II*, which didn't pick up many good reviews Stateside - in fact, many critics ignored it completely - but still managed to fly straight to the top of the box-office charts. That's not surprising, since make-up maestro Chris Walas' sequel to David Cronenberg's original remake (still with me?) possesses many of the same

audience-pleasing pluses. Focusing on Martin Brundle, the son of genetic genius Seth (played by Jeff Goldblum in the first film) the movie delivers the goods in the true stakes as Martin goes head to mandible with those cleanliness freaks out to clip his wings. In his first outing as director, Walas acquits himself very well, although perhaps not surprisingly he's stronger on the set-pieces than the quieter passages. What the film lacks - and a quality that Cronenberg's movie had in spades - is heart. To me *The Fly* was more a doomed romance than a straight horror movie, whereas this sequel is really just a solid genre film - and not at all a bad one.



Slasher sequels

One of the most active American independents in our favourite genre, New Line Cinema, have just announced two major new sequels which'll be of particular interest to Horror fans. First up they'll be taking us even further down filmland's eeriest avenue with the \$6.5 million **A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child**. I just hope it isn't

Freddy's...

Robert Shaye and the other high rollers at New Line are also planning the third instalment in the most famous slasher cycle of them all, **Texas Chainsaw Massacre 3: Leatherface** goes into production in the Spring on a \$4 million budget. Maybe someone should tell them we haven't even seen **Part 2** yet...

Knife-Edge

Somewhere over the rainbow there's a place called casting heaven. It's that magical matching room where Jack Nicholson was lined up as the Joker in Tim Burton's new **Batman** movie and Mr Muscles, Arnold Schwarzenegger, was given the big club to play Fred Flintstone - and it's where the producers of the forthcoming Jekyll and Hyde fear flick, **Edge of Sanity**, selected cinema's favourite cross-dresser Anthony Perkins to play the ultimate double rôle. Mind you, I have a feeling that Robert Louis Stevenson would turn in his grave if he knew some of the things his confused creation gets up to in this new movie version of his classic terror tale...

Director Gerard Kikoine dishes up some delightfully lurid tableaux which helped

to keep me awake, not least a seduction scene featuring a lady of the night who, rather confusingly in the Victorian setting, sports a Madonna-style 'Boy' belt-buckle. If you think that's a howler, wait till you see Dr Jekyll handing over a pound coin in payment for services rendered. Of course, that may just be Kikoine's attempt to give this stylishly mounted - in every sense - movie a contemporary relevance. Or then again, it may not.

Whatever your opinion of the movie as a whole there's no denying that Tony Perkins always gives good value for money and as the double-dealing doctor here he's on fine eye-rolling form. I certainly wouldn't let him anywhere near me with a scalpel...



SPOOK CITY

Ever feel a little out of step? That's my emotion at the moment, since I must be the only film fan I know who's not delighted by the news that **Ghostbusters II** is currently shooting in New York. Mind you, I suppose there's one consolation - it can't possibly be worse than the first one...

Re-uniting the original cast of Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Ernie Hudson (the fourth Ghostbuster everybody forgets), the movie returned to the first film's supernatural stamping-ground, New York City, for several weeks location shooting before returning to L.A. to complete a very extensive special effect schedule. Judging from recent comments by co-producer Michael Gross, the recipe is going to be pretty much the same as before. "The new script, from a story by Dan, Harold and director Ivan Reitman, has the same kind of action and as many laughs. We know from the first film that the audience is younger than we thought it would be, and we're concerned to avoid anything too frightening." One early concession to quality made

by star Bill Murray, still trying to retrieve some Christmas goodwill after the disastrous

Scrooged, was a little change, "I didn't want it called **Ghostbusters II**, so I came

up with **The Last of the Ghostbusters**". Bill, I take my hat off to you.





Dr Who play

Further details of the new Doctor Who play have now been released. Two of the stars are pictured here, Jon Pertwee as The Doctor, and Rebecca Thornhill as Crystal.

The play starts at Wimbledon Theatre on 23rd March and then goes on to:

His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen- April 3rd, Empire Theatre in Liverpool- 10th April, Theatre Clwyd in Mold- 17th April, Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham- 24th April, Hippodrome Theatre in Bristol- 1st May, Theatre Royal in Glasgow- 15th May, Opera House in Manchester on 22nd May and Apollo Theatre in Oxford.

It sounds like fun and should make an amusing night out!



Channel 4's Science fiction season

Channel 4 are to show a season a science fiction films which is to commence in April.

Starting the season will be "1964" which is being shown on tv for the first time. Others due to be shown range from classics such as "It Came

From Outer Space" and "The Day The Earth Stood Still" to more modern films such as "Dune", "Brother from Another Planet", "Fail Safe", "2010", and "Stastic".

Eleven films in total are planned. They should make interesting viewing.



"Fail Safe"
"Dune"



"It Came From Outer Space"
"The Day The Earth Stood Still"



Star Turn

Last month I saw a quite amazing cast list for a movie.

True, that's not such an unusual occurrence, but in this case it really made me check my drink. The movie was Clive Barker's **Nightbreed** - and the star? None other than David Cronenberg, that gifted Canadian purveyor of intelligence and intestines. Yes, I know Cronenberg has popped up in films before - for example, he was one of the many directors who appeared in John Landis' movie, **Into the Night** (along with a little too much of Landis himself, if I remember correctly) and then memorably essayed a startled gynaeccologist in his own top-grosser **The Fly**.

Now he's stepping up to leading man status for the charming Clive in this tale of the strange people who bring London to a kind of life after dark. Part of the movie focuses on a TV programme called **Dream Date** in which a magic fairy grants a celebrity of your choice the ultimate night on the town...

And no, I don't think the Magic Fairy is played by David Cronenberg.

TV News

If you, like me, find the thought of the ex-Mrs Sylvester Stallone, Brigitte Nielsen, floating around in zero gravity quite mind-boggling, you'll be interested to know about a new fantasy production in which she makes her British television debut. Called **Murder on the Moon**, it's a major Science Fiction adventure co-produced by one of Britain's leading ITV companies. That should be some guarantee of quality - although after watching *Trick or Treat*, I'm not so sure...

While all Jim Henson fans eagerly await his new Nic Roeg-directed feature **The Witches** (based on the Roald Dahl story), we can also look forward to more helpings of that splendid fantasy series **The Storyteller**. New segments should be screened here later in the year, following their transmission on television Stateside as part of a new

FANTASY ROUND-UP

Get set for not one but two **Back to the Future**

sequels, currently being wrapped up in Hollywood. The first follow up, **Paradox**, will feature time tripper Michael J Fox in no less than three different roles: he plays Marty McFly and his son and daughter. For the drag act he's don a pretty tail wig and dress. So, I guess his \$3 million fee makes it worthwhile.

Back Fact No 1: Joker Jack Nicholson took as ever wandered into the wrong party in London recently. Now normally that wouldn't rate a mention here, except that in this case the gathering he'd accidentally gatecrashed turned out to be a charity cocktail party for the New Zealand High Commission - and the minimum donation was \$25,000. Jack paid up and left - not at a dance.

In case you're wondering whatever happened to **Blade Runner** star Rutger Hauer apart from those Guinness commercials, here's the latest: He'll reveal to the big screen in **Blind Fury**, playing a sort-of superhero who battles in forces of crime - and don't they all?

Anthropological Jeff Goldblum follows up **The Fly** with **The Mad Monkey**, co-starring our very own Miranda Richardson in a telling tale of modern day

love and sexual obsession. I think I'll book my place in the cage right now.

On the eve of the release of her Very Important fourth album **Like A Prayer**, Madonna joins Warren Beatty and Mandy Patinkin in **The Princess Bride** for the movie version of **Dick Tracey**...

The great Steven Spielberg recently donated \$850,000 to a new ballet studio in New York City. It's now called - guess what? Yep, the Steven Spielberg Ballet Studio.

Back Fact No 2: The automobile in Tim Burton's new movie is a very special model indeed. Costing \$50,000, it was built around an American Chevrolet and features such desirable optional extras as a bomb detector, a parachute pickup service and, of course, an engine seat.

Former ET star Drew Barrymore, who 'sadly had' to lick a bad drink and drugs problem at the age of 13, is set to relive her real-life ordeal in a TV movie called **Getting Straight**.

Meanwhile, whatever happened to Henry Thomas? I hear that Starburst, along with a couple of other mags, ploughing the same furrow, have come under attack from a group dedicated to protecting minors for 'offending public decency' - and that's just this column.

Back Fact No 3: His Purpleness himself, Prince will write four songs for the soundtrack of the movie, including one for the crazy climax in which nit-ficker Jack Nicholson drives through Gotham City on a carnival float throwing millions of dollars to a riotous crowd. Now that's my kind of guy.

Apparently Paul Hogen will follow the **Croc Dundee** epic with **The Phantom**, in which the Asesle brown-pusher will don a skin-tight purple costume with blue and black striped garters. That's a sight I think I can live without.

And not quite finally. **Back Fact No 4:** Is **Batman - The Movie** going to be any good? Well, I'm told by a very reliable source that the early footage screened Stateside looks exceptionally promising - very stylish, strange and dark. I can't wait.

If **Moonwalker** hasn't put you off Michael Jackson completely, then get set for a new animated movie from the high-voiced one - it's based on those whales which were trapped in the Alaskan ice a while back - and playing one of them will be Marlon Brando. Now some cruel people would call that typecasting. Me, I'd just say - with that voice, he could play anything.

To the next time

Jim Henson house.

Meanwhile plans forge ahead over here for the major new television film telling the true story of Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, whose own life was as full of intrigue, romance and excitement as any 007 adventure (it says here). Just named to take the lead is heart-throb (it also says here) Charles Dance, who I must confess had always left me rather cold as an actor until I saw his polished performance in the hugely under-rated arthouse flick **Pascali's Island**. Those of us who were waiting to see what playing a villain in Eddie Murphy's big fantasy movie **The Golden Child** would do

for Dance's career (in fact, it did precisely nothing) will be interested to see how he breathes life into the man

who created 007. Next they'll be suggesting he plays Bond himself - but I hope not.

"The Storyteller"



The Improbable Adventures of TERRY GILLIAM

A Starburst Feature By Timothy Robins

Tired of dog fighting space craft? Bored of winsome dwarfs and wicked witches? Just plain fed up with the hoary old clichés of film fantasy? If so, then *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* is for you. Giants with detachable heads, spears made of celery sticks, a trip to the moon by balloon and a voyage around the world in the belly of a giant fish are among the highly improbable ingredients in Terry Gilliam's new multi-million dollar blockbuster.

TERRY Gilliam looks exhausted. He has spent all day answering questions from the press. It has been over a year and a half since the former Monty Python animator first spoke to *Starburst* about *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* and its release - on March 17 in Britain - has been awaited with eager



anticipation among the general public and the film community alike. Among the small but select number of people invited to the screening I attended were no less than Jack Nicholson, currently playing the Joker in Tim Burton's *Batman*, and Bernardo Bertolucci, director of the nine oscar winning *The Last Emperor*.

Gilliam has already demonstrated an eye

for the fantastical in films such as *Time Bandits* and *Brazil*. He sees *Munchausen* as the third part of a trilogy. *Munchausen* is the happy ending - the triumph of fantasy over reality. As such it stretches Gilliam's talents to the limits of the possible and beyond. But it is the film's troubled history which has attracted media attention as much as its incredible content.





Problems with the production began almost immediately when it began shooting at Cinecittà studios in Rome. Collapsing scaffolding and lost costumes were among the hazards which compounded the production's spiralling budget. In November 1987, its financial backers, Film Finance, stopped the shoot for two weeks and threatened Gilliam with the sack unless he brought the production under control. Cuts were made in the script and filming continued. When I spoke to the director he talked about some of the problems he had bringing *Munchausen* to the big screen.

Back when you were publicising *Brazil* you described yourself as a compulsive liar. *Baron Munchausen* is reputed to be the greatest liar in history. Do you feel an affinity with the character?

Yeah, I've got a problem. I'm desperate to learn the truth of things, on the other hand once I learn the truth I don't think I respect it. I think if one gets too literal with the truth it gets a bit tedious. I think this is the end result of reasonableness. Everything becomes so predictable. One needs someone out there stretching the limits. Usually compulsive lying comes out of desperation. The truth becomes so boring that you start inventing things.

What attracted you to the idea of making *Baron Munchausen*?

I really don't know. They're just wonderful stories and nobody had done a film for a long time on *Munchausen*. I thought it would be nice to resurrect it in one form or another. Initially we were trying to stay close to the original stories but as the film progressed it grew into something that was slightly different, using some of the stories and inventing others. Lying about the Baron is what we're doing. Unfortunately, the one story I wanted to do most of all is not in the film. I cut it out of the script just before we started shooting. There's one sequence where the Baron and his horse ride into this town, the portcullis crashes down and the horse is cut in half. The Baron rides around on the front half of the horse, finds the back half, and stitches the two halves together with some laurel branches. This horse heads, the laurels take root and the Baron rides around in the shade of the horse's laurels. It's a really lovely thing and was going to be the whole and part of the film. It became clear we were never going to be able to afford it so I chopped it out. This keeps happening on my films: The thing that interests me about the idea in the first place is the thing that gets cut out.

There have been a number of other film adaptations of *Baron Munchausen*, most notably a German one in the 1940's and Karel Zeman's 1961 production. I know you screened these before embarking on the project. What did you learn from them?

The Karel Zeman one was the one I preferred. I loved the combination of live action and animation and the use of engravings for backgrounds. I suppose, ultimately, it was too whimsical for me. The German one I thought was terribly



Terry Gilliam and Producer Thomas Schühly

ponderous, lumpen. George Harrison was the person who showed it to me for the first time and he enthused about it but it just triggered nothing off inside me. It didn't leap at you and stretch your imagination. I don't know what I learnt other than I didn't want to do anything like either of those films.

Did you write the script and then worry about how the effects were going to be achieved?

Yes. It tends to be: write the script, then storyboard it, then work on down the line from that. When I'm doing the storyboard I have a fairly good idea about how I'm going to make it so I can make some judgement about how long it's going to take and what it's going to cost. It's always tricky, clearly in this case it was even more tricky.

The original budget of 23 million dollars made *Munchausen* one of the most expensive independent productions in history. How did you set up the financial side of the film?

Thomas Schühly (the Producer), Jake Eberts (the Executive Producer) and myself went out to LA with lots of drawings and storyboards and scripts. Luckily we walked into Columbia Pictures and David Picker, who was head of production, had read the script, loved it and wanted to do it. It was that simple. We also got money from an Italian distributor and there was supposed to be money from a German distributor but the bulk of it (20.5 million dollars) was from Columbia. RCA Video bought the video rights. Being an independent production we had to get a bank involved and a completion guarantor which was Film Finance. They guaranteed the film would be made. They seemed to be convinced that it could be done, as we thought it could be done, for 23.5 million dollars. There were a lot of people who were wrong.

It seems surprising that Columbia was interested in a picture of that size. David Puttnam was there at the time and he had the reputation for preferring more

modestly budgeted pictures.

That was what was bizarre about the whole thing. When he first got the job at Columbia I rang him up and said 'I've got a film and I need 20 million dollars David. Are you interested?' and he said, 'No'. It was really David Picker who wanted to do a big film and eventually convinced Puttnam to do it.

What did Picker see in the film?

I never asked him! (laughs) No. I think he saw a great fantasy. He liked my films. He like *Brazil*. It was a chance to see what I could do with the material. That's the price of admission they paid - now they find out!

Are they happy with the result?

I think so. I mean it's a whole different crowd of people now. All the people that were there when we began are no longer there.

Did that cause any problems for your film?

I don't know that it caused problems exactly. It wasn't as if they were enthusiastically behind us all the way. They were sort of floating around. It didn't matter to them if *Munchausen* went out of control because it didn't affect Columbia. They had a fixed price.

Turning to the cost of the film. The Baron is played by John Neville who is best known for his theatrical work. Did you have him in mind for the part early on?

Yes, he was one of the early choices but his agent said he didn't make films anymore so we stopped thinking about him although his name kept popping up. I'd been screen testing other people and had almost decided on somebody else. Then, when I was in Rome, the make-up lady said, 'You ought to use John Neville'. I said, 'He doesn't do films' and she said, 'Why don't we find out? I'm a friend of his, I've got his number here'. She called him in Canada. It turned out he was a big Python fan and he



Young actress Sarah Polley as Sally Salt in "Munchausen"

said, 'Come on over' and he agreed to do it. He had a gap between his theatre seasons and it fitted in perfectly. Also the part just suited him. It's funny, charming, gallant swashbuckling everything you could want.

Vulcan, God of Fire, and the King of The Moon are played by Oliver Reed and Robin Williams. I understand they were late additions to the cast.

Originally I had written the part of Vulcan with Bob Hoskins in mind but he was busy doing his own film. Lee Cleary, who was the second assistant director, kept saying, 'Get Olvie in here'. He'd worked with him on *Castaway*. He needed the money for Christmas I think (laughs) so he turned up. I think he's brilliant. I don't think anybody could have played the part better. It's a wonderful performance.

The King of The Moon was going to be played by Sean Connery. Originally the whole Moon sequence was quite different in the original script. When the money problems arose we cut it down from two thousand people with detachable heads to two people with detachable heads. Sean Connery would have been this really majestic king in this mad world. When we rewrote the scenes and cut them down it wasn't right for Sean at all. He didn't want to do it and I didn't want him to do it. The feeling was mutual. There wasn't any big deal about that. Sometime after I got Charles McKown (the films co-scripter) to rewrite the part. The idea came up of this mind/body battle going on. I thought it was very funny. Eric Idle was talking to Robin Williams on the phone. Robin was intrigued and wanted to do it.

Did the rôle give Robin Williams the chance to improvise?

Yes. We shot an awful lot of stuff because we just let him go. It was all scripted and worked out but he added to it, changed it. We tried to keep him within the perimeters of the script. If we had left all the material in it would have stopped the film. He was



Uma Thurman in the second of her two rôles, as Rose

great, brilliant. But then of course we had the awful job of having to cut him down to size to fit the film.

The Baron's travelling companion Sally Salt is played by Sarah Polley. Where did you find her?

We started looking for a girl to play the part in England. There were some sweet girls but they were a bit incipid. The ones we saw in America were far too precocious. The casting lady said, 'Let's try Canada the mix between the countries might prove interesting'. Sarah, at the time was doing TV series. I met her the same day I met John Neville and she's great. Without her we couldn't have made the film. She's eight and a half years old and a totally professional actress. I never treated her like a child. That was a very lucky find.

Tell me how you got the creative team together.

The first person who Thomas introduced me to in Rome was Dante Ferretti who designed the film. He'd done *The Name Of The Rose* and Fellini's films. We got on really well and like the idea of working in Rome. The original plan was to bring out basically the same team who made *Brazil* and *Time Bandits*. In the end, when we saw what it was going to cost, it became impractical. We brought out the English special effects guys and had people like Gabriella Pescucci as costume designer. It was a mixed team and that was not the best of possible worlds because everybody had

different ways of working. It was actually a pretty depressing time because the whole group of people I'd planned to make the film with suddenly weren't there. The people we got were wonderful. There's no question about their talents and skills. It's just you can't try to cement a team together at the same time as making something as complex as *Munchausen*. The result was that everything went slower, there was miscommunication. People didn't understand why something was being asked for. Looking back it may have been cheaper to bring out all the people I wanted originally.

Munchausen's second unit director was Michele Soavi who is well known to *Starburst* readers as the director of *Stagefright - Aquarius*. How did he get along?

Again, Michele had never worked on anything as big or outrageous as this. Even his unit was hurt by internal politics. He didn't really have control over the group of people he was working with. They weren't his choice. I look at the film now and think half of it is his. He did a lot of special effects stuff, a lot of battle details. Because we were getting behind schedule, we would leave places and he would stay behind and try to pick up all the shots we hadn't done. I think it was very difficult for him because he was trying very hard and was always frustrated by the team he was working with. There was a lot of shouting and screaming going on.

What problems did you face shooting in Rome?

Language was a big problem, ways of working. There's a lot more experience of this kind of film making in England. Less so in Italy. A lot of people were very nervous. They were trying very hard but when people aren't acting with confidence then things are slowed down. Language was a problem because if somebody misheard what you were saying you didn't realise that.

Was that why the budget got out of hand?

Basically there was no real production on this film. It was very, very badly produced. I mean on a film like this you need a lot of organisation and not a lot of bullshit. And there was a lot of bullshit. Things have to be planned in advance and the planning was never there. The first assistant director and myself tried to take over the production and run things with daily meetings in my office. There were also a lot of promises that things were going to appear and of course they never did. So the first day of shooting we realised we were in trouble because nothing was quite coming together. At a certain point when the shit hits the fan the decision has to be made to carry on or stop. Ultimately the decision was made to carry on. It was also the first time I've entrusted all the power over controlling the money to somebody else. I don't think I'll do it quite like that again.

Do you think 23 million was a realistic budget in the first place?

Number one, I was working in Italy and didn't know what things cost, so I had to rely on what other people said. Okay **Brazil** was made for about 13.5 million dollars. We had 23.5, and things in Italy were supposed to be 30 or 40 per cent cheaper. So effectively we had the equivalent of 30 million dollars for something that was only a bit more complicated than **Brazil**. Constantly we were being told that in Italy you can get things for a fraction of the cost. But it didn't work out that way. The producer kept telling everyone that we were making the biggest movie since **Cleopatra**. That was a stupid example. The film was a disaster except for the Italians who got rich on it. So none of the suppliers gave the usual deals. They charged twice as much. The insurance company had to pick up the extra. That was a big shock for them. To be honest, they should have done their homework more carefully. A lot of this was based on the fact I'd made films cheaply before - films that look very expensive for very little money. But that required the conditions to be right. I needed the right people around me.

What was your reaction when you were threatened with the sack?

I thought, 'Wonderful! Great! I could get out of this mess!' I was very seriously considering taking up my offer. I just wanted out. The situation was just so untenable. But there were a lot of people who said I couldn't go because I'd dragged John Neville and all of those people out to Rome. There was no way they were going to let me abandon them there. Charles McKaown, normally a quiet retiring character, suddenly became very irate and demanded I pull my finger out, cut the script down and do whatever we had to do to get the film

going. And people like my wife were saying, 'Just simplify it Terry. Make it as simple as possible'. The joke of the thing, the great irony, was that the more pages we cut out of the script the more the budget went up. I thought there's something wrong here. We'd better start adding things and save money.

You mentioned earlier that The Moon sequences were changed. What was supposed to take place on The Moon in the original script?

Too much! In the beginning the film had a lot more about people starving to death. When they got to The Moon they did nothing but gorge themselves on food and have a wonderful time. It was the antithesis of life in the city where people were hungry and dying. There was a huge banquet sequence with the Baron juggling giant grapes and balancing huge goblets on his head. There was a scene with him jumping down the queen's bosom to retrieve the grapes. Really outrageous stuff. There was a musical group who sang and their bodies danced away from their heads. All this was the Feast of Forgetting just before the lunar eclipse when everybody forgets everything and starts again afresh.

Was Sting supposed to be in the musical group? Early publicity seemed to suggest he would be singing on The Moon.

Yeah, I also kept reading Sting was supposed to be singing the title song. This was more of Thomas's bullshit. Sting was intended to be where he is - the heroic soldier.

The world's briefest cameo appearance.

Yeah. It's a wonderful gag!

Although the film has its humorous side I found it a very dark fantasy in some respects.

Yes. It's not your jolly japes. Death is alive and well. And The Moon is quite psychotic really. It's true lunacy. And when they are inside the whale, the Baron is in the depths of despondency from the heights of being in love with Venus. The whole film is really a barometer of the Baron's moods. He gets younger and older according to how he feels. I don't know which comes first the events or his moods. The world is a place where death and destruction reign. In that sense it's dark.

...and often grotesque.

Yeah. That seems to be shocking for a lot of people. Kids respond to it. Fresh, unblemished minds are ready for it. I always said I was making the film for my daughters. It's tough in the way kids are tough. In Germany (where the film was first released) they gave it a certificate where if you are under 12 you can't see the film. That's crazy. Children are much tougher than their parents. Kids are fascinated by death because it's not something that's immediate for them. They're not going to die. Adults worry about these things a lot more.

So are you happy with the finished film?

I'm happy it's over! [laughs] Yeah. I just hope I haven't made it too brusque. In an attempt to appeal to as large an audience as possible we trimmed it really tight. Whether that was right or not we'll find out. Basically, I think it is pretty wonderful. I certainly think it is unlike anything else anyone is likely to see for a long time.

Below: John Neville as the Baron



CONVENTION CORNER

This is a free service to convention organisers all over the world. To have your convention listed just send details to the Editorial address given on the contents page

EL YOORE

A Multi Media Convention
25-28 March
Shepperton Moat House Hotel
Shepperton, Middlesex.
Price: £20 Weekend, £10 One Day
Write to: Mr and Mrs Bougourd,
"Bradenell", Grand Boulet, St Peter
Port, Guernsey.

STAR TREK GENERATIONS

An exhibition by Rotherham Star Trek
31-29 April
Rotherham Central Library

NAME THAT CON 2

21-23 April
Stratford House, Fenton Mo
314-343-4300.
Price: \$12.50 until 1/31/89
Guests: FGOH David Means and
Casey Hamilton Means
Extra Special Guest: Wilson "Bob"
Tucker
Write to: PO Box 575 St. Charles
Mo 63301 Hot Lines 314-773-8626
Michel Durland or 314-724-0291
Marie Wilbrand

SOL III '89

28 April-1 May
Adepin Hotel, LIVERPOOL
Price: £20
Guests to be announced
Write to: 39 Deringham Avenue,
Manor Park, London E12 5DP

ANGLICON II

Celebrating British TV Series
5-7 May

Hyatt Seattle Hotel

Seattle, WA
Guests: Michael Keating, Mark Ryan
Write to: Anglison, TPO Box 8207,
Kirkland, WA 98034-8207, USA
Tel: (206) 367-7060.

WILFCON 5

13 May
Wilfrid Laurier University
Waterloo, Ontario
Canada
Price: \$3.90 pre-registrations, \$5.50
at the door
Guests: Terence M Green (Author),
Sue Kinnard (Artist), Harry Kremer
(Fan)
Write to: WILFCON 5, c/o Dennis
Mullin, 6-09 Donald Street,
Kitchener, Ontario N2B 3G6, Canada

BritTV II

The best of British television
26-28 May
Hyatt Lincolnwood, Lincolnwood, IL,
USA
Price: \$30, \$40 at the door
Guests: Dave Rogers, John
Freeman, Eric Hoffman, John Peel,
Terry Nelson
Write to: BritTV Entertainment, PO
Box 148335, Chicago, IL, USA,
60614-8335

ULTRA WORLD

28-29 May
Unicorn Hotel, Bristol
Telefantasy convention, with guests
from various telefantasy shows.
Price: One Day £3, Two Days £18,
Supporting £4
Guests (confirmed): Jan Chappell
Write to: UltraWorld (St), Steve
Brittain, 6 Springfield, Bradford on
Aven, Wiltshire, BA15 1BB

DEEP SOUTH CON 1989

9-11 June
Memphis Marriott, Tennessee, USA
Price: \$20 through Kubas, \$25
thereafter and at the door
Guests: Cron Scott Card, Mary
Hanson Roberts, Patrick Molloy,
Write to: DSC 27, 1229 Railroad
Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38122,
USA

CAROUSEL CONVENTION

Doctor Who
24-26 June
Holiday Inn, CARDIFF.
Price: both days £18, one day £8,
supporting £4
Guests from all aspects of the
show's history are invited to attend
Write to: Carousel '89, 76 Thwaite
Ave, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria,
LA14 1AN

ZygCon 26

Doctor Who Weekend
5-6 August
University of Essex, Colchester
Price: £5, £7.50 after 1st July
Guests (work permitting) Deborah
Warring, David Banks, Nicholas
Counsey, Stephen Wyles, John
Freeman
Theme of Paradise Towers, Para
Treasure Hunt on Sunday in Clacton
Write to: Mr P Bardsdell, 11
Sandown Close, Great Clacton,
Essex, CO15 4PP

U-NICON

11-13 August
Queen's University of Belfast
Price: £7 attending, £3 supporting
Guests: Terry Pratchett, Ian Banks
Fan Guest of Honour, Iain Thomas
Write to: U-NICON, 106 Somerton
Road, Belfast, BT15 4DG

GREENWOOD III

Rage of Sherwood
26-27 August
Shepperton Moat House Hotel,
Shepperton, Middlesex
Price: £20 full weekend, £11 per day.
Write to: GREENWOOD, c/o Mr &
Mrs Bougourd, Bradenell, Grand
Boulet, St Peter Port, Guernsey,
Channel Islands

PORTMEIRICON 89

The Prisoner convention
1-4 September 1989
"The Village", Portmerion, NW
Wales.
Outdoor events free to all (small
hotel toll for non-residents). Indoor
events open only to Prisoner
Appreciation Society (Six of Nine)
members.
For annual membership and details
write to: Six of Nine: PO Box 60,
Harrogate

UFORIA 2

A celebration of UFO
8-10 September
Owens Park Hall of Residence,
Manchester
Price: £20 to end of March, £25 after
Guests to be confirmed
Write to: Kabe Runnman, 87 Aman
Way, Corby, Northamptonshire,
NN17 2PP.

NE 'A' DRIAR 3

Star Trek
26 October
Shepperton Moat House Hotel,
Shepperton, Middx
Price: £8.50, £9.60 on the day
Guest: Rupert Evans (confirmed)
Write to: (with SAE) Clase
Saunders, 12 Saville Crescent,
Ashford, MDDX, TW15 1SX

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It seems odd that it was not until the last couple of years, with the well-hyped *Watchmen* series from DC Comics, that the medium has become something to be respected and accepted as an art form by the general public in the UK. Over the next few months this column will act as an introduction to the world of comics, specifically the more fantasy orientated ones which are generally available to fantasy fans en masse.

Comic Store

by Gary Russell

Field Leaders

To start then, a brief look back at the origins of today's glut (and it is a glut) of comics. To most people, talking of comics immediately says 'America' - and it is hardly surprising. DC Comics started in the 1930s, with Action Comics being the title which launched a thousand imitators. That first appearance of Superman set the tone for comics for the next decade or so. Superman was then joined by *The Batman* from the same company whilst other companies gave us the heroic exploits both pre and post-war of *The Human Torch*, *The Sub-Mariner* and *Captain America*. The last three were all from the stable which would one day become Marvel Comics. During the fifties, the superhero comics faded in popularity to be replaced by mystery titles, and horror and supernatural strips with no regular running characters. But DC persisted with their roster of colourful costumed crimebusters - still, however, missing one vital ingredient.

Ironically it wasn't DC who 'made' the genre but Marvel Comics who, in late 1961, opted to do a superhero strip. But with one vital difference. Their team of four would not just be fighters with alter egos to hide behind, but would be three dimensional characters whose stories would concern their lives and loves out of costume - there would be no secret identities. They were people who, as well as

having code names, would be real all-American folk. Indeed as the years went by, *The Fantastic Four* became celebrities on par with film stars and politicians within what is known as the Marvel Universe, where even Marvel Comics edited, as a publishing group telling the stories of the various super folk who inhabited the world.

Unlike DC, Marvel always went for this almost soap opera-like format and over the last twenty five years, it has seen some of the best comic strips of all. This soap aspect is highlighted best of all in the seemingly never ending stream of 'X-Titles', lead by the mutant *X-Men* and its multitude of spin offs, *The New Mutants*, *X-Factor*, *X-Terminators*, *Fallen Angels* and most recently the UK based *Excalibur* - one of the very best strips ever put out by the company. For instance the last fifteen years or so has seen storylines being built up, seemingly forgotten and then suddenly reintroduced, leaving never ending supplies of unanswered questions - most of which were conveniently and quite excitingly finally wrapped up this winter in a major event in the Marvel Universe called *Infinity*.

The New Boys

Of course, it was unreasonable to expect both DC and Marvel to

hold a complete monopoly over comics and over the past eight years or so, a lot of independent small publishers have appeared. Most independents produced black and white comics rather than colour ones, written, drawn and financed by fans. Consequently, however turgid an independent comic really was, a sort of snobbery grew up in comic circles (and it's still prevalent) that DC and Marvel were just money-making uninterested businesses and that independents were the only things of any merit. Although a great number of independents, both black and white and colour are excellent and often better than 'The Big Two' a lot vanished equally as suddenly, resting their laurels on stories which gained cult status almost entirely due to their novelty rather than the actual quality of storytelling, but many still remain. Of those *First Comics*, *Renegade*, *Aardvark-Vienham*, *Dark Horse*, *Eclipse* and *Comico* produce some of the finest work in the field today.

Cute Animals

However, costumed heroes are no longer the staple diet of comic readers, certainly not in the case of the independents. During the early explosion of the independents, it was the weird funny-animal type

books which were all the rage: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*; *Cerebus*, *Boris the Bear*; *Hamster Vice*, *Miami Mice* etc. These were not exactly comedy books, but all took place in alternative worlds where it was quite possible to suspend disbelief, to accept animals who talked, used guns and so on, were real and heroic. These adventures were often detective adventures, or futuristic war stories. Of all of them, three 'animal' books rose above the rest, using humour either to poke fun at themselves (a good comic should always be able to do that) or at their alternative genre or be used as analogies of today's life.

Cerebus, a highly popular tale of an Aardvark, captures the latter market - originally one of many, now a sole survivor due to the sheer quality and intelligence of its creator, Dave Sim. *Boris the Bear* started life as a good satire of the entire black and white/independents explosion but lost direction after about eight issues and sadly is now a shadow of its former glory. My 'favourite funny' book started life with Fishtrap Publications, but is now printed, in full colour (sorry colour) by the excellent Comico company - *The Fish Police* tells the story of a detective in the fish police who might once have been a man and his battles against the likes of S.H.A.R.K. and S.O.U.L.D. It's great fun, again with its tongue firmly in cheek, and creator Steve Moncuse has never yet written anything short of a masterpiece.

Things to Come

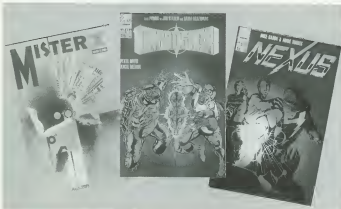
The independents of today also have one other genre which 'The Big Two' frequently attempt but never sustain, the Science-Fiction/Fantasy comic. Over the next few issues, I'll be examining some of the best Science Fiction in comics, past and present - looking at characters such as *Nexus*, *Dreadstar*, *Warlock*, *Captain Marvel*, *Master X*, *Watchmen*, *V for Vendetta* as well as comics versions of *Star Trek*, *The Prisoner* and one of the very best comics ever, *Dark Horse's* sequel to *Aliens*.

If there are any areas of comics you'd like explored, drop us a line and we'll try to get it into *Comic Store* over the next few months. Oh yes, we'll also get round to a few of the more interesting super heroes as well. Eventually.

COMIC WATCH

Look out for...

Master X (Vortex Comics)
The Prisoner (DC Comics)
Dreadstar (First Comics)
Nexus / Nexus Legends (First Comics)





A Starburst feature by Jon Abbott

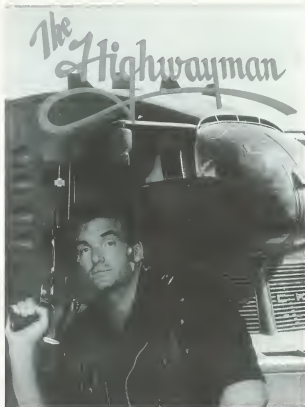
Many crimes occur on some isolated stretch of highway in the vast expanse which is America. This is the premise of the new ITV-bought fantasy action/adventure series, and a very special breed of lawman is required to deal with it. However, it's doubtful that even our own dear Maggie and her stooges would sanction a bazooka-toting leather-clad toughie barrelling along the road in an invisible, invincible super-truck!

THIS outrageous cross between **Mad Max** and **Knight Rider** is the latest creation of TV producer Glen Larson, the man once described as a guy "who not only knows which banks to rob, but which way to escape with the loot!"

Larson has made a career out of turning successful feature film concepts into TV series, and a brief run-down of his can be found in our **Battlestar Galactica** piece in *Starburst* No 120.

Suffice it to say that he's best known to *Starburst* readers for such previous fantasy adventure series as **Battlestar Galactica**, **Buck Rogers in the 25th Century**, **Manimal**, **Automan**, and **Knight Rider**.

The **Highwayman** is a nameless government super-hero who is one of many similarly-equipped super-men in shark-like super-rigs running a Highway Patrol which would have had of Broderick Crawford, TV's previous guardian of the road, spinning in his grave. This bunch operate with the most advanced of technology, running their everything-proof monsters around in secrecy, the implications of which, of course, are never tackled. "Hard to believe anybody goes to work wearing leather, chains, and a bazooka" says liaison lady Dawn in the pilot film, and indeed it is, but this is Glen Larson at work, the man who gave us some of the shakiest series concepts in the history of TV. After **Automan**, **Manimal**, an effeminate talking car, and some of the storylines of **Battlestar Galactica**, it might be best just to sit back, turn your brain off, and revel in some of the spectacular stunts and wild plotlines. After the high camp absurdity of Larson's outrageous **Mission: Impossible** rip-off **Masquerade**, and its equally hilarious progeny **Cover-Up**, believe me, this is pretty sober stuff in comparison. It's all slightly reminiscent of **The Green Hornet**, a 1960's **Batman** spin-off which told of the exploits of the crime-fighting descendant of the Lone Ranger, and the Hornet's 'rolling arsenal' the Black Beauty was al-



most certainly part of the inspiration for **Knight Rider** (which actually sprung from an episode of Larson's gormless **Bj And The Bear**, a swipe of **Every Which Way But Loose** starring a trucker and a chimp!!!). In the pilot, the **Highwayman** is even assisted by an oriental sidekick hi-tech wizard Mr Toto.

The pilot concerns a group of surly truckers named 'the Bulets', and their leader Bo Ziker, who have been set up as very convincing patsies to take the fall for a huge fraud instigated by a local bigwig and the small-town sheriff (who, as usual, is in the employ of the villains). Guest-stars in the pilot include G Gordon Liddy of real life Watergate notoriety, who has already guested on **Airwolf** and **Miami Vice**, B-video regular Wings Hauser, usually cast as a toughie, but here playing the same sort of brown-nosing simpleton he played to such perfection in Stephen Cannell's hilarious pilot for the Adam West series **The Last Precinct**, and **LA Law**'s Jimmy Smits, showing a very different side from his smooth lawyer persona as the fall guy trucker Bo Ziker.

The pilot film has some superb ideas and stunts worthy of a modest feature film, but although the series is tailor-made for a

resounding reception from the juvenile audience, ITV has aired the series late at night, probably because of the amount of action, weaponry, jeopardy, and explosions. I know it's absurd, and deep down even ITV knows it's absurd, but look at it this way - they've invented video recorders, and the late hour gives you a fighting chance of not seeing the series butchered in the way **Beauty And The Beast** has been for its 8.00 airing.

Following the pilot, Claudia Christian as Dawn and Stanford Egi as Mr Toto were dropped, and three new characters added - Mark 'Jacko' Jackson as Jetto, Tim Russ as D.C. Montana, and Jane Badler, familiar to many as Diana from **V**, as Ms Winthrop, **Highway**'s new government liaison.

Narrating is William Conrad, who also narrated the opening credits for **Buck Rogers in the 25th Century**. Once familiar to TV audiences as the burly lead in **Cannon**, he'll shortly be seen in the new crime series **Jake And The Fat Man**, and was the bad guy in Larson's unsold pilot **In Like Flynn**, a **Romancing The Stone** steel.

As the **Highwayman** himself is Sam Jones, best known to fantasy buffs as **Flash Gordon** in Dino De Laurentis' 1981



An 18-wheel diesel rig which becomes a helicopter!

remake of the old Saturday morning serial classic, although he looks very different here. Trivia buffs may be amused to learn that Jones first attracted attention as a contestant on *The Dating Game*, the US version of Britain's *Blind Date*. No wonder everybody keeps getting up to do their nauseating party pieces on the show! Jones can also be seen in a very different rôle in the very funny video release comedy, *My Chauffeur*.

Since the start of the 1980's, with the notable exception of *Knight Rider*, Larson has had trouble keeping his shows in production, and while such comic-bookery as *Galactica*, *Buck Rogers*, *Automan* and *Manimal* are enormously popular in Europe, they keep getting cancelled in the all-important American market - probably because, unlike his fellow action/adventure compatriots Stephen Cannell (*Greatest American Hero*, *A-Team*) and Donald Bellisario (*Magnum*, *Airwolf*) - he persistently fails to include any adult elements (for indeed basic common sense) for the adult market, which needs to take this sort of fare with a liberal pinch of salt. The eight episodes made will probably be monster hits in Europe, where certain markets ask in vain for further episodes of Larson's fantasy series.

Many of the series' episodes feature intriguing, if somewhat familiar, TV-SF scenarios. In *The Billionaire Body Club*, 'Highway', as he is referred to, investigates the graverobbing of freshly buried people who have had various body parts removed and been drained of blood! The search for a 'modern-day vampire' leads them to a wealthy doctor's mobile surgery, where he takes the required bits and pieces out of his young victims and then quietly bumps them off... The parts are going to wealthy officials from other countries, who arrive in the US poorly, and then go home in the best of health!

The episode climaxes with an outrageous chase to stop the doctor's departure, even

as he furiously attempts to swipe a poor girl's body parts en route!

In *Hitch-Hiker*, Highway is assigned to rendezvous with a crashed flying saucer and transport the ailing radioactive alien to hospital. Unknown to all concerned is the fact that the alien is of the 'body-snatching' mind-controlling breed of space beings so beloved of TV and cinema, and the injured creature is controlling the actions of all those around him. Joe Regalbuto, an excellent character actor in many fine series, but probably best known to TV fantasy

buffs as the nerdy partner of Jesse Mach in *Streethawk*, plays one of the many zombie-victims of the spaceship pilot.

In *Road-Lord*, Highway's investigations into the death of a fellow Highwayman take him to a hi-tech organisation experimenting with cybernetics. The finale includes a spectacular battle with an army of reconstructed 'bionic men'!

The *Haunted Highway* sees us in familiar 'mystical Red Indian' territory, with all the old chestnut clichés which go with the plot. In 'Til Death Us Duel Part the corny old storyline of having the hero go to the aid of his former mentor is resurrected, along with the by-now familiar resolution.

One particularly intriguing episode is 1945, another old warhorse of a plot premise, but always a fascinating one nevertheless. In this episode, the Highwayman travels into the past through a time-warp created by a nuclear test, and arrives on the day before the very first atomic bomb test, which a scientist's son has determined to prevent from ever occurring. By bumping off his own father, Junior figures that he will surrender his life gladly in order to prevent history's most lethal weapon ever being invented. When all the scientists are blown to kingdom come the night before the test, he figures, no bomb test, no bomb.

The flaws in this line of thinking were admirably demonstrated in the memorable *Star Trek* episode *The City On The Edge of Forever*, and the old meet-yourself/meet-your-parents/change the past shtick has been done to death from *The Time Tunnel* to *Back To The Future* and back again, via *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*, films such as *The*

The Highwayman and sidekick, Jetto





Philadelphia Experiment and The Final Countdown, even **Lost In Space** and **Land Of The Giants**, but it never fails to make thought-provoking TV, films, and reading.

Send In The Clones is another recurring old fave that has been attempted several times before, most notably as TV pilots for such hopeful series non-starters as **The Questor Tapes** (by Gene Roddenberry), **The Clone Master**, **J.O.E. And The Colonel** (aka **Humanoid Defender** on video) and **Steel Collar Man**, to name just a few. There have even been sit-coms on the theme, such as **Holmes And Yoyo**, **Quark**, **My Living Doll**, and **Small Wonder**. This episode is in much the same vein, with cute experimental wants-to-be-human humanoid Mac fleeing from wicked Synthachem, the sinister government agency which has created him. Unfortunately, Mac has been programmed to play a war game in which he must assassinate the mayor, and Synthachem send a band of laser-blasting assassins to do away with the clone before he can do away with the mayor. Highway endeavours to save both but there's still a twist to come. One scene which promises to be particularly amusing has JD Cannon as the stress-troubled police chief who must somehow find a way to tell the mayor that he is the assassination target of an army of laser-toting clones!

Cannon is an expert at troubled slow burns, having played the rôle of Chief Clifford on the zany early-'70's cop show **McCloud** (here, he's called 'Chief Clifton'), and is reunited for this cameo with his fellow supporting player Terry Carter, best known to SF buffs as Colonel Tighe in another Larson series, **Battlestar Galactica**.

Other Galacticans to put in an appearance in different episodes of **The Highwayman** include Kent McCord, George Murdock, Anne Lockhart (daughter

THE HIGHWAYMAN

Episodes in order of production

Pilot: THE HIGHWAYMAN

Written by Glen Larson and Doug Heyes
Directed by Doug Heyes
With Sam Jones, Stanford Egi, Claudia Christian, Jimmy Smits, Kenny Morrison, G Gordon Liddy, Wings Hauser, Jennifer Runyon
Stranded on a stretch of deserted highway, a young woman is menaced by biker group The Bullets, who have a grudge against her father. Out of nowhere comes a huge and deadly truck...

8801: THE BILLIONAIRE BODY CLUB

Written by Glen Larson
Directed by Dan Haller
With Christopher McDonald, Cindy Morgan, Kim Ulrich, Ken Swofford
The Highwayman investigates reports of a modern-day vampire, but uncovers a healthy trade in spare body parts for the wealthy and powerful.

8802: THE HITCH-HIKER

Written by Glen Larson
Directed by Larry Shaw
With Joe Regalbuto, Jamee Steley, Robert DeGuz, Wendie Malick, Arlen Dean Snyder, Cristina Raines-Crowe
The Highwayman discovers a live injured alien being at the site of a crashed flying saucer.

8803: ROAD LORD

Written by Glen Larson and Mark Jones
Directed by Dan Haller
With Kent McCord, Anne Lockhart, Clarence Williams III, Clyde Kusatsu, George McDaniell, George Murdock, Jesse Dizon, Mark Jones
When a fellow Highwayman is murdered, then turns up seemingly alive again, Highwayman investigates a high-tech corporation which has been intimidating the locals near the company's new plant.

When a fellow Highwayman is murdered, then turns up seemingly alive again, Highwayman investigates a high-tech corporation which has been intimidating the locals near the company's new plant.

8804: THE HAUNTED HIGHWAY

Written by William Rabkin, Lee Goldberg, Burt Pearl and Steven Seers
Directed by unknown at presstime
With Marie Heasley, Paul Koslo, Rodger Gibson, Michael Horse, Dehl Berl, Gary Grubbs, Tim Roseovich, Andy Romano, Steven Keats
When an American Indian is accused of murder,

of June Lockhart, Mrs Robinson of **Lost In Space**, Roger Davis, Lloyd Bochner, and Lara Parker, all of whom appeared in that series.

No series, even one only eight episodes and one pilot long, would be complete without any 'friends-in-danger' stories, and Glen doesn't let us down. Warzone has Jetto running amok after being injected with a hallucinogenic drug which has convinced him he's back in Vietnam, while Jane Badler as Ms Winthrop comes a cropper in **Frightmare**. This is an episode

der, the Highwayman stumbles onto a long-lost gold mine and an ancient curse 'of fire and ice' which will kill anybody who tries to mine there.

8805 'TIL DEATH US DUEL PART

Written by Jonathan Dey, Steven Sears and Burt Pearl
Directed by Larry Shaw
With Joseph Bottoms, Chad Everett, Jim Maniet, Melissa Grier
Highwayman breaks an old friend out of a Mexican jail in order to find the men who framed him, while his colleagues are forced to pursue them both.

8806: 1945

Written by Mark Jones, Steven Sears, Burt Pearl and Glen Larson
Directed by Rob Bowman
With Greg Mullavey, Lloyd Bochner, Bill Hudson, Liz Kessler, Patrick St. Esprit, Paul Mancuso, Peppi Sanders
The Highwayman pursues the son of a nuclear scientist through a time-war which takes them all to 1945, one day before the first atomic bomb blast, where the son intends to change history and prevent the discovery of nuclear power.

8811: SEND IN THE CLONES

Written by Glen Larson, David Garber and Bruce Kalish
Directed by Alan Holzman
With JD Cannon, Terry Carter, Pamela Shoop, Gary Lockwood, Grete Blackburn, Michael Pataki, Tony Aciaro
Highwayman befriends a clone, on the run from the top secret laboratory where he was created.

8812: FRIGHTMARE

Written by Glen Larson, David Garber, Bruce Kalish and Burt Pearl
Directed by Rob Bowman
With Vince Edwards, Alex Courtney, Stanley Kamel, Jack Ging, Judd Omen, Otto Felix, Janet Curtis
Ms Winthrop is captured and subjected to a machine which will drain knowledge from her dreams... specifically the location of a felon about to hand over evidence on The Mob to the authorities.

Series Ends

reminiscent of that old episode of **The Prisoner**, A, B, And C, in which Highwayman's talson is attached to a machine which can read her dreams, in the hope of finding out the location of a mob squealer who's about to grass on the syndicate. The Highwayman must race against time to rescue Winthrop before she breaks and inadvertently reveals the location of the mob informer before he can testify.

Not the most original eight hours of television then, but they promise at least to be action-packed and diverting!

PREVIEW

Presented
by
Alan Jones



'The Wolves of Willoughby Chase'

COMING SOON The Wolves of Willoughby Chase

England 1835 is a dark and dangerous country over-run by ravenous wolves. On the edge of a bleak moorland, the mansion of Willoughby Chase is a haven for Bonnie living with her indulgent parents and kindly servants safe from the sinister outside world. Safe, that is, until the arrival of Sighcarp, the evil new governess, whose greed and envy ensures the wolves won't be kept from the door for too much longer!

Based on the 1962 best-selling book by Joan Aiken, *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* is a \$5 million stab at the elusive 'family' audience by Zenith, the *Wish You Were Here* people. Starring Stephanie Beacham, (Sable Colby in *Dynasty*), Mel Smith, *Rocky Horror* Show creator Richard O'Brien, Geraldine James and Emily Hudson, the adventure fable is Stuart Orme's feature debut following the TV thriller series *The Fear*. Produced by Mark Forster from a screenplay by William M. Akers, *Wolves* was shot entirely on location in Czechoslovakia where production designer Chris Gothic Hobbs created the imaginative interiors at Barrandov Studios in Prague, Europe's largest film facility.

Mark Forster, *Xtro* and *The Cold Room* producer, said, "The book had originally been optioned by director Alan J Pakula. American writer Akers had loved the book since childhood and couldn't understand why a film hadn't been made. So after detecting who exactly owned it, he bought the rights off Pakula. He

then wrote a script on spec for *Crossing Delancey* director Joan Mordin Silver. She then involved Zenith who asked me to line-produce. Based on the script and the fact the book had become a classic in a relatively short space of time, I agreed, though I generally like to create my own projects. After raising the money, Joan was unavailable and Stuart Orme came on board."

The big problem the production faced concerned the scripted fantasy elements. The credit - Dog Costume maker: Sylvie Temple (director Julien's sister) - reveals all according to Forster. He continued, "Joan said she'd seen *The Company of Wolves* and was never convinced they were anything but dogs. That went for any such movie and she insisted the wolves be wolves. Well, we soon realised why everyone used dogs! Wolves aren't trainable and they have to be fenced into a landscape or else control is impossible. So Chris designed a wolf costume to disguise alterations and we cracked it after going through three versions. First the buckles were too small and the animals kept breaking them. Velcro didn't work either, nor did three separate pieces comprising of a body section, a head section and snout bit - the gaps were too noticeable. Deciding on a complete suit with large buckles, Sylvie hired a stuffed albatross for fittings. But as it was dried, and therefore smaller, every time we fitted a live animal the proportions were all wrong. After endless nightmare adjustments we ended up with dyed brown curly fur and made something resembling a cross between a wolf and a lion. There were sixteen costumes in all because one sequence had fifteen wolves chasing the kids. The dogs themselves would shake about for a while when the costume was put

on but once in place they accepted their made to measure suits. And it works - the animals aren't wolves, but they aren't dogs either which fits the basic strangeness."

As Zenith couldn't finance a film over \$5 million, a figure laid down by a management brief, *Wolves* had to look outside Britain to cut costs. Forster continued, "I had gone to film school with Jan Balzer, production head at Barrandov, and he offered me a terrific deal. On a recce we found some gothic castles easily doubling as Willoughby Chase. Snow was promised before our start date, (January 18th 1988), which turned out to be untrue until literally the day we arrived. But the major stumbling block was finding a red brick industrial factory for Blastburn, the foreboding orphanage / laundry set we wanted like a Victorian concentration camp. Eventually we found a mid 19th century coalmine so we decided to shoot the entire film in Prague."

Forster feels Czechoslovakia fits his exact aspirations for *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*. He said, "The last thing I wanted was an English / Pinewood period atmosphere. I wanted something less cosy with a different surreal edge you can't quite place and Prague gave us that fantasy feel, it isn't consciously different but nor does it fit any set pattern you've seen before. Chris' big sets, dressed with bizarre but authentic props, and his slightly exaggerated costume design gave the film an oblique oddness and off-the-wall quality. The Heath Robinson-style machinery, which the Czech craftsmen built to work for Blastburn, added untold additional elements of fantasy too". According to Forster, Stephanie Beacham, as Sighcarp, heightens the fantasy even more with her ac-



'Willoughby Chase' - Stephanie Beacham, not in sable

'Lair of the White Worm' - Hugh Grant and Catherine Oxenberg



ling style. It marks her return to the genre where she made her name, as *The Colbys* were years before *The Nightcomers*, *Dracula AD 1972*, *House of Mortal Sin*, *Schizo*, and *Now the Screaming Starts* and *Inseminoid*. And the rôle, likened to the image change Diana Dors successfully pulled off in *The Amazing Mr Blunden*, was one Ms Beacham felt she couldn't refuse as her children loved the book. Forstater continued, "Stephanie is well known now and soap audiences will love this movie. If people go just to see her looking awful as opposed to fashion plate Sable, that's fine by me. I'm not sure I like the comparison to *The Amazing Mr. Blunden* as I'm desperate to avoid that sugary blandness. I set out solely to make a film with the qualities of early Walt Disney. Those were my rôle models as he was quite happy to terrorise children into deep trauma one moment and the next second spring a joke. The extremes of maximum response between terror comedy are what I wanted to achieve. Avoid the middle ground and get the hard edges across."

And that's Coming Soon!

The Lair of the White Worm

Snakes alive! Coming on strong like the remake of Hammer's *The Reptile* you never wanted to see, Ken Russell's *The Lair of the White Worm* is a delicious hoot from start to finish. Forget the worm-eaten script, the passages of boring exposition retreading what little plot has gone before and the hopelessly inept Catherine Oxenberg. *Lair* is refreshing lunatic nonsense and *The Man From Del Monte* Python's most enjoyable film since *Crimes of Passion*.

Based on Bram Stoker's worst book - and it shows! - *Lair* is a Christianity versus Paganism tract, but don't quote me, pitting two orphan farm girls against an aristocratic Lady of the Manor all representing opposing poles of belief. A Scottish archaeologist digs up a giant worm skull in the Trent girls' garden which is promptly stolen by Lady Sylvia Marsh (Amanda Donohoe) as the central icon for her cult rituals up at Temple House. Lady Sylvia is responsible for the disappearance of the girls' parents and wants Eve (Oxenberg) for virgin sacrifice in her altar basement. Sister Mary (Sammi Davis), the Scotsman (Peter Capaldi) and reincarnated dragonslayer Lord James D'Ampton (Hugh Grant) all join forces to stop the cobra woman's venomous skulduggery ensuring we're kept writhing with laughter in the process.

Leaving no worm unturned - watch for the naff symbolism of snake-like hosepipes, spaghetti, conga lines and vacuum cleaners - Russell's script incorporates inten-



'Lair of the White Worm' - Amanda Donohoe

tional non-stop howlers from frame one. 'Do you have children?', Donohoe is asked, replying, 'Only when there aren't any men around.' 'Ooo me Spotted Dick' raves slow-worm Owenberg rushing frantically into the kitchen, 'Kinky lot primitive man' says Davis discovering soft-porn neanderthal drawings in a cave, and the dire West Country accents only serve to make the atrocious acting on display all the more hysterically eccentric. Russell's coiled combination of Fifties Ealing Comedy, psychedelic Sixties Hammer visuals and Seventies video hallucinations straight out of *The Devils* are a heady clash pitched at exactly the right level of self-conscious camp. I can't re-Mamba the last time Russell got his outmoded directing and scripting styles perfectly in tune with the trashy subject matter he's gleefully wormed out of this disaff. *Dracula* reread.

But it's reptilian Diva Donohoe who steals the whole show as the asp to make you gasp. How she had the gall to keep a straight face as the vamp High Priestess you'll love to hess has to be acting of the highest order. Seducing a boy scout in chic black thigh-length vinyl boots and stomping around her mansion like a box constrictor on heat, Donohoe is fantastic - especially when she sheds her skins! For sheer side-splitting nerve though her sexy slink through corridors, enticed out of the house by snake-charming music, is one of the most sustained moments of hilarity this side of

Beyond the Valley of the Dolls. Even when she's up a tree tempting Eve - in a crass Garden of Eden reference - luring her into bra and panties bondage, snake in the grass Amanda Donohoe is a must-see delight.

As for the brief windscreen viper hallucinations, they run the usual sleazy Last Temptation of Ken Russell gamut from nude nuns and lesbian cat-fights to sacrilegious sex-toy tunnelvision. But Russell's ludicrous imagery, stupid *Carry On Camping* script and flat direction adds up to a juvenile fantasy on his own limited terms and these celluloid Snakes and Ladders are one huge unpretentious joke we can all finally share. *The Lair of the White Worm* won't make anyone jump out of their skin and it's a film to approach with extreme caution if serious horror is wanted. But for instant cult appeal there hasn't been a better film in days for Jonathan Ross to advertise.

(Starburst rating: 8)

Alien Nation

The standard buddy cop thriller gets an edgy alien work-out in Graham Baker's engrossing and highly enjoyable *Alien Nation*. Originally called *Outer Heat*, the new title is producer Gale Anne Hurd's attempt to rally the film as some vague sequel to *Aliens*, that mega-successful joint venture with her ex-husband director James Cameron. What it should have been allied to more honestly is *V*, as this Earth-bound Sci-Fi saga

Right: 'Alien Nation' - Mandy Patinkin as the alien George and James Caan as Sykes

Below: 'Alien Nation' - Terence Stamp as Harcourt





could easily be the integration continuation of that mini-series.

The story takes place in the near future after an alien culture lands in the Mojave desert, when their spacecraft malfunctions. Following a quarantine period, the 'Newcomers' are allowed refuge by the US government, given human names - San Francisco - and are integrated into a highly suspicious reluctant society. Police detective James Caan volunteers to team up with Mandy Patinkin - one of the first 'Slags', as they are prejudicially called on the force - to investigate his previous partner's murder. What they uncover is a corrupt drug underworld run by high society 'Slag' Terence Stamp pushing a liquid blue cocaine synthetic which could exploit the humanoid work-force through slave labour addiction as it did on their home planet with devastating results. How the oddly-matched pair overcome their mutual distrust of each other and forge a dependent bond is movingly played out against this thinly disguised tract for racial tolerance.

The social comments are all very amusing - Pepsi billboards aimed at the intergalactic immigrants' increasing spending power for example - and they never get preachy because the comic book trappings lend themselves incredibly well to the easy Sci-Fi interpretation of seriously intentioned equality issues. It's great to see James Caan back on screen in the sort of part he rarely plays now, but is so good at. And opposite Caan's Shirley Harry, Mandy Patinkin expertly conveys the voice of racial harmony and reason under a ton of Stan Winston's smooth reptilian make-up. Both these actors bounce brilliantly off each other and lift *Alien Nation* beyond the



'Kamikaze'

obviousness of fast-paced violence, car chase action and gun fetishism into a far more interestingly relevant area.

My only complaint about *Alien Nation* rests on the distributor cuts which seem to have miraculously occurred while it crossed the Atlantic. Fox UK tell me the censor passed the film intact, but four minutes are nevertheless missing from the American release print. As a result the ending is rather confusing because the last gory murder has been completely excised. Still, *Alien Nation* restores Graham Baker's reputation after

his last two duds, *The Final Conflict* and *Impulse*, and just seeing Terence Stamp overdose on composite crack to metamorphose into a Super Nova Mutant is a worthwhile alienation experience in itself. (Starburst rating: B)

Kamikaze

With the boredom of *Terminator* still emblazoned on my memory, I approached this French Sci-Fi fantasy with more than a fair share of trepidation. Even the sure-fire hallmark of quality conjured up by

Le Dernier Combat director, Luc Besson, credited as producer wasn't going to lull me into a false sense of security. Thankfully *Kamikaze* turned out not to be another sub-titled endurance test but a rather amusing account of technology going berserk on the satellite-saturated airwaves.

Basically it's about a sacked computer genius, Michel Galaru, inventing a machine to dispose of television personalities he loathes. When they appear live on screen hosting chat shows or the news, he presses a button, a signal is sent down a cathode ray, and they explode on air in front of millions of viewers. Richard Bohringer, threatening to replace Gerard Depardieu as the most ubiquitous French screen actor, plays the laconic cop who investigates the surprisingly gory murders on behalf of the networks and indulging in amour with Dominique Vanant on the side.

Kamikaze was an inexplicable failure at the French box-office last year. While I can appreciate its budget limitations, Didier Grusset's frivolous hi-tech fable is still an interesting infotainment combo of airy Gallic charm, unusual plot tensions, and sinister covert operations. Wish-fulfillment aside - look out Wogan and Mike Smith, your days are numbered! - *Kamikaze* is a welcome self-mocking addition to the switching channels debate and what interactive cable television could be leading to if we were so lucky. (Starburst rating: B)

Out of the Dark

Out of the Dark is a horror film sure enough - plain horrible. What on earth did executive producer Paul Bartel think he was trying to



achieve in the lame excuse for tawdry violence against women? An instant classic? A tacky Brian De Palma homage? A quirky upturning of nasty horror film clichés? An easy way to give his B-movie icon friends employment? Whatever, it's a failure on every miserably count. **Mortuary Academy** director Michael Schroeder's psycho-thriller is both tedious and drawn out despite the impressive trash casting of Tab Hunter, Karen Black, Divine, Bartel, Bud Cort and Laine Kazan in a part intended for Nancy Allen - another De Palma blow out.

Black runs the seedy 'Suite Nothings' sex over the phone chat-lins. One mysterious caller wears a clown mask while killing her audio escorts. Bobo could be any member of the cast who all act laughably suspicious in front of detective Tracey (**Repo Man**) Walters. Look for the least likely person and you'll reach the conclusion

well before he does. From the genre perspective, **Out of the Dark's** humour and horror dramatically cancel each other out. And in the soft-core sex area, the phone dialogue is about as titillating as dialling directory enquiries. Paul Bartel used to be a reliable schlockmeister and I'll always defend him for the off-beat brilliance of **Private Parts** and **Eating Raoul**. But on the strength of this cheesy slice of mistitled lurid obnoxious that could be increasingly difficult in the future.

(Starburst rating: 1/2)

Critters 2: The Main Course

Grab the popcorn and stab the Klara carton, those space pocupines are back in a zippy continuation of Stephen Herek's engaging original. This time out the

mop heads with teeth are under Mick Garris' direction and he practically ignores any semblance of a story but instead piles one fun incident on top of another for lightning-paced easy digestion.

The Krills turn up once more in Grovers Bend after hatching from dormant multi-coloured eggs. As the locals are preparing for the Easter holiday, nothing is seen as amiss until the two of Curbusters return to Earth to finish off their earlier attempt at obliterating the deranged Muppets. The bounty hunters still have their shape-shifting abilities and the best moment in **Critters 2** occurs when one transforms to a *Playboy* centrefold complete with staple. That reveals the level of clever and/or stupid humour which Garris sustains remarkably well.

With personable acting by Scott Grimes, Don Oppel and Barry Corbin, **Critters 2** hurtles through a quick-fire series of fast-food or-

gies. Easter Bunnies crashing through church windows, assaults on hamburger factories, cheap but special effects and a maulous joke at the expense of New Line's own Freddy Krueger. Pure garbage disposal entertainment doesn't often come as slick and sly as this. And I know for certain Garris would be the first to agree with that assessment without complaining I'm making derogatory remarks about his jovial junk movie.

(Starburst rating: 5)

THE LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM. Produced, written and directed by Ken Russell for Vestron Pictures and based on Bram Stoker's novel. Special Effects by Image Animation. Music composed by Stanislas Syrewicz. Starring Amanda Donohoe, Hugh Grant, Catherine Oxenberg, Peter Capaldi, Sammi Davis and Streifford Johns. 94 mins. Cert 18. Released March.

ALIEN NATION. Produced by Gele Anne Hurd and Richard Kobritz. Directed by Graham Baker. Written by Rockne S O'Bannon. Aliens created by Stan Winston Studios. Music by Curt Sobel. Starring James Caan, Mandy Patinkin, Terence Stamp, Kevin Major Howard, Leslie Bevis, Peter Jason and George Jeneky. 90 mins. Cert 18. Released April 7th.

KAMIKAZE. Produced for Gaumont by Luc Besson. Directed by Didier Grousset. Written by Besson, Grousset and Michele Halberstadt. Music by Eric Serra. Special Effects by Georges Demetrescu, Pierre Foury and Jacky Dufour. Starring Richard Bohringer, Michel Galabru and Dominique Lavanant. 90 mins. Cert 15. Released April 14th.

OUT OF THE DARK. Executive producer Paul Bartel. Directed by Michael Schroeder. Written by Zane Levitt and J Gregory De Felice. Starring Bartel, Karen Black, Bud Cort, Laine Kazan, Divine, Tab Hunter and Tracey Walter. 90 mins. Cert 18. Released April.

CRITTERS 2: THE MAIN COURSE. Executive produced by Robert Shaye. Produced by Don Oppel. Directed by Mick Garris. Written by Garris and DT Twohy. Music by Nicholas Pike. Critters created by the Chiodo Brothers. Starring Scott Grimes, Liane Curtis, Don Oppel, Barry Corbin and Terence Menn. 87 mins. Cert 15. Released April 14th.



PLMAXX PRESENTS A PRODUCTION BY NEW LINE CINEMA/SHO FILMS A DISTRIBUTION BY "CRITTERS 2"
 A FILM BY SCOTT GRIMES • LIANE CURTIS • DON OPPER • BARRY CORBIN •
 TERENCE MENN • DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: RUSSELL CARPENTER EDITOR: BOB
 MARSHALL MUSIC BY: NICHOLAS PIKE COSTUME DESIGNER: JANE ROSE • PRODUCTION DESIGNER: BOB MARSHALL



FEEDBACK

Editor: If we ever sit here thinking we've got things right then those many sharp-eyed and knowledgeable readers out there will soon tell us where we've gone wrong. So...

News Flash

Barry Piggott

Fallsword, Manchester

...Here are the main points of the news, again.

Contrary to popular belief, the BBC release of the 'complete' radio version of the *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is found to be missing a scene from episode three, for 'no particular reason'.

The scene, which saw the début of Marvin's humming career and the Magratheans' fiddle tastes about their planet's surface, as revealed by Zaphod Beeblebrox, was, however, present in a recent radio four repeat.

A spokesman for BBC Enterprises said that they wouldn't be doing their job properly if they didn't sneak in a pointless out somewhere.

Editor: But what really happened was...

André Willey

Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands
In issue 127's Soundtracks column Richard Sayer praises the BBC for finally releasing the complete and uncut original version of Hitch-Hiker's on CD.

Well almost - there is in fact about one minute missing from episode three - all the stuff with the whale meat and Marvin humming like Pink Floyd is gone, right up to the point where they enter the planet itself.

I checked with the Beeb and it's all to do with performance rights for the background music. To which I say why don't they pay the extra if they're going to charge £40 for the 'original radio series', as stated on the cover. 'Most of the original radio series' would be more accurate. They didn't seem to have problems with any other stuff, so why Floyd or The Beatles (surely it couldn't have been Also Sprach Zarathustra?)

I wouldn't have minded quite so much if it wasn't one of my favourite sections of the series!!! I feel CD's are so often rip-offs these days, now that they cost virtually the same as an LP to produce - why should we pay an average of £5 extra?

Reader's Plight

Editor: Now for a letter we'd usually refer to our Classified/Pen Pals section, but John's story should be drawn to everyone's attention.

John Nickson

20 Albany Court, Ashburnham Rd, Ham, Surrey, TW16 7PW
I have been a fan of the American writer Harlan Ellison for

a long time now and although his books are extremely hard to get hold of, I managed to build up quite a collection over the years, a collection I was extremely proud of. Notice I say 'was' proud of and not 'am' proud of. The reason for this is that most of my large book collection was recently ruined due to a rather bad flood caused by the bursting of the water storage pipes situated above my living room ceiling. I live on the top floor of a rather badly designed block of flats you see and most of the world's water supply came through my ceiling when said pipes burst. I was asleep in bed at the time and awoke believing judgement day had arrived. Fortunately I was insured so everything has now been corrected as far as most of my possessions and belongings are concerned, but now we come to the matter of my book collection. I'm hoping you will print this letter so that my fellow Starburst readers may read it and maybe help me rebuild my collection. If any of them have any Harlan Ellison books they do not want I will happily buy them, and when I say 'any' Harlan Ellison books I mean 'any', as I have to start again right from zero. You see these books are now out of print so I have to rely on the helpfulness of my fellow Starburst readers.

Editor: Anyone out there able to help?

Superboy?

Robert Reid

Camelon, Falkirk
Superboy?? Don't make me laugh. Billy Allen did enough of that in issue 126 (HA HA HA HA HA etc).

I expected something better than this all-American trash from the Salkind brothers, original Superman movie moguls, but somewhere along the line something went wrong. Why? Where?

As a devoted Fanderson I couldn't help but notice that among the writing 'talents' was Fred Friedberger, former producer of *Space 1999* - and we all know what happened to that!

But even he couldn't be blamed for acting more wooden than Gerry Anderson's puppets - they might have made a better job of it!

But the stories and situations left a lot to be desired. Our hero gets chucked into a swimming pool, then, while his girl friend jumps in

to join him, he transforms into the Boy of Steel, flies off into the wild blue yonder to rescue his pal, returns to the swimming pool and she hasn't even missed him. And as any comic enthusiast will tell you the young Clark Kent did not spend his youth rubbing shoulders with Lex Luthor as this series insinuated. I hoped the series would get better, but it didn't. It was a good idea, but it didn't work and I only hope that the 'remake' of the Batman movie doesn't suffer the same fate. The Caped Crusader deserves a lot better.

A W Kay

Chorley, Lancashire

Your reviewers appear to have missed the fact that *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* is currently being shown on Wednesday evenings on BBC2 as part of their DEF II series. I am writing to make some observations and ask if you intend to do a feature on the series in the near future. First a general point on the series itself, ITV sold the show to the BBC but 'forgot' to include the pilot film in the deal.

Secondly has any other viewer (there must be some) noticed the way the Starfighters seem to change colour? I noticed this fact particularly during the *Planet of the Amazon Women* episode shown last week (at the time of writing) ie when it was on the ground Buck's Starfighter was yellow, yet when they are in the air the Starfighters appear to be white. Presumably they are supposed to be cream in colour and the change may be due to different lighting.

Editor: You may well have noticed that this issue we have an interview with Gil Gerard. As always the BBC keeps very quiet about what it is going to show, and so this is the first issue we've had free to put the interview in.

Starburst Slipping?

Colin Kirkinton

Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
I've only just started reading *Starburst* again, after an absence of a year or so. The reasons I stopped were two fold:-

1) The time
After *RoboCop* and *Near Dark* there have been precious few good genre movies this past year. Not being an obsessive SF fan, the prospect of yet more *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who* articles is not something I look forward to, too greatly. Let's face it, most television attempts at SF/Fantasy/Horror fall flat on their faces. If *Doctor Who* is the best on offer, well don't you think you'd be better off with a good book?

I'm sure most people only watch it because of their fond memories of the classics of yesteryear. Fair



COMPETITION

Set Visit Set Visit Set Visit

Night Breed

Once again *Starburst* is able to offer a visit to the 'shooting' of a new film, particularly suitable for our more discerning readers. The photographs on this page are from some of our other set visits.

In the very near future a lucky *Starburst* reader will be able to visit the sets, at Pinewood Film Studios, of **Night Breed**.

To put your name in the tombola you just need to answer three questions correctly - you'll find some clues in this issue.

- 1) Who wrote the book the film is based on?
- 2) What well-known director appears in the film?
- 3) The film's star was a blue Renko and has known some altered states. Who is he?

IMPORTANT: The visit will take place very soon after this issue is published. So send your answers in as soon as possible. We will select the winner a week before the visit takes place so please give us a telephone contact number.

Send your name, telephone number and answers on a postcard to;

**Starburst
(Night Breed),
PO Box 371,
London SW14 8JL**



enough, but do we really have to be given feature upon feature on it, covering every single aspect? It would be fine if the series was any good, but it's not. It's awful. It's treated as a joke by everyone but the fans. Starburst need not treat it so reverently. Praise good work! But kick the bad work!

Doctor Who deserves to be kicked hard. And so, without any decent genre films (although hardly your fault) too much time has been spent on worthless material and retrospection. Retrospection is, of course, no bad thing. There are many wonderful old films which richly deserve the spotlight, but... **Battlestar Galactica? Airwolf?**

2) The magazine
You are, in a sense, fortunate, being 1 in a field of 1. The main competitors all look at films from a different angle. I do, though, miss the days of *Marvel*, especially around issues 45ish-60ish. There was a real sense of enthusiasm and 'friendliness'. Of course, they had the films to write with enthusiasm about then. Spielberg and Lucas were at their peak. In comparison, their recent offerings have been embarrassing. But, way back then, I felt I knew the writers and editors - Dez Skinn, I never met him, but he was my friend. How about in the letters pages having comments after letters signed 'Stephen' instead of 'Editor' - it's so formal! How about an introduction? It's wonderful to get that old enthusiasm back. Of course it took *Marvel* 4 years to get there, and it only lasted just over a year, before degenerating into the most awful magazine ever, before you retrieved it. But the friendliness is creeping back, what with the censorship debate, an old subject, but important. David Prothero wrote, I think, the definitive letter, but let

Fright Night 2 - on its way...

that not stop us thinking about it. It affects us all. Our fantasy films have so much potential. Our mutual enemies - those that try to repress 'tasty' material - are doing near irreparable harm. 1984 is 5 years away, but closer than ever.

Jonathan Jenkins
Llandudno, Gwynedd
'Fantasio Media' is the description of your magazine which I subscribe to? Seriously, rethinking or restructuring is necessary or I fear you might lose readers like me and others. **Dr Who** is your biggest downfall! I mean, anyone who enjoys the humour of *Reinbow* and enjoys the taste of *Fairley's Rucks* might find this mindless unimaginative trollop mildly interesting. From the egotistical characters to the egotistical names (Aos - hot) and the egotistical acting. Any **Dr Who** reports are not worth the paper it's printed on, and don't tell me about another **Dr Who** Convention - what are they, the latest Government employment scheme?

As for *Lost in Space*, give me a break!
But what would stimulate my brain cells? Well, where was your coverage of *Die Hard*? I'd call it a type of fantasy and I have read a reporter calling it the *RoboCop* of '89. What about coverage of the third Indiana Jones film? I know filming has finished. And what about *Elm Street 4*, 13th Part 7, *Young Guns* (fantasy), *Silpstream*, *Fright Night 2* and many more? Also you missed out *Angel Heart* and limited coverage of *Amazing Stories*.

David Madley
Chorton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester
This is the first time I have been drawn to write to Starburst, a I am a bit confused. Why have I

not seen any articles on the hit movie *Scrooged*? Is this not a fantasy movie?

Editor: Hmmm! Where do you start after those letters? Well first off the title 'Editor' should really read 'Letters Editor'. This is because it's not always put together by the same people.

These pages are a team effort and so we just lump ourselves together as 'Editor'. Perhaps this does seem a bit impersonal but we have tried in these pages to answer letters and comments, and hope that the rest of the magazine is not too stuffy or too tongue in cheek.

So there's too much coverage of **Doctor Who**? Perhaps, although we could go a lot further before we cover 'all aspects'. We have given so much coverage for two reasons. The first is that we felt the 25th season of any programme should be celebrated, and secondly **Doctor Who** is just about the only Science Fiction/Fantasy on British TV at the moment.

As for the films Jonathan mentions, well as he says *Die Hard* is only a 'type' of fantasy, and it was in our Preview section, but there's so much more obviously fantasy type material around to cover that it will inevitably get a brief coverage. Perhaps it will turn up in a retrospective section. *Silpstream* was covered last issue, and *Fright Night 2* soon will be.

As always the problem is that you cannot please all of the people all of the time. Some of you out there hate *Star Trek* with a vengeance, but it is still the most popular series we cover. Cohn and Jonathan both express their dislike for certain shows, but you can see later that other readers do not agree with them. We'd like Starburst to be something for everyone.

Starburst Success?

Tom Hanks (not 'The')
Bury, Manchester
This is the first time I have been compelled to write to your excellent magazine. For what reason? Simply to ask, because *Lost in Space* has creatures, spaceships and planets that are all alike, special effects that are laughable, and characters that are wooden (except, of course, Dr Smith who is so over the top, it's hilarious), why is it that, even after all these years, many people (like me) enjoy watching it? Is it because it is so funny? It so, this would be because of Dr Smith. Let's face it, *Lost in Space* wouldn't be what it is now (what it is now) if it wasn't for this extremely popular and amusing character. Also, thank you for your excellent coverage of the wonderfully entertaining film *Who Framed*

Roger Rabbit (Even though nothing ever will equal *Aliens*). PS: Any news on *Alien III*?
Editor: Yes, shooting starts in this country very soon. I must admit I had never crossed my mind to compare *Aliens* with *Roger*.

Paul Singh Sangha
Leicester
I am a great fan of *Lost in Space*. When I read the interview with Jonathan Hanks (issue 125) he said he got letters from fans. Could you please give me an address so I could write to him or someone on the cast?
Editor: Sadly the answer is 'No'. We cannot give out personal addresses of people we've interviewed as most of them probably wouldn't want us to, and I'm afraid we just haven't got the time.

K Lambert
Lowestoft, Suffolk
Having purchased various back issues I feel I must congratulate you on your magazine. I particularly enjoyed your feature on *Knightrider*, this (to my mind) highly enjoyable US fantasy series being a favourite of mine, along with the likes of *Streethawk* (shame about its early demise) the latter episodes of *Airwolf*, *Battlestar Galactica* et al.

I've noticed, for some time, how narrow minded some people can be in stating that *Knightrider* is a kids show. This I do not agree with as I'm sure many a person can identify with the Michael character fighting for good, truth and justice (after all that's what Superman's all about). And let's face it, who would pass up the opportunity to drive or even own a car like KITT. Fantasy maybe, but isn't there a child in all of us? As for lacking in humour... After watching every episode (and enjoying everyone of them) I've noticed the odd in-joke, usually between KITT and an outsider, but I don't think this series was intended to be humorous.

Just look at how successful the series was in respect to *Airwolf* etc and maybe there are a people out there who do enjoy a good (or dare I say excellent) action, adventure series with down to earth characters and stories which are entertaining enough without the so-called 'technicalities' of the more 'run in the mill' series.

Brosnan Backlash

Stephen Moore
Basingstoke, Hants
A drawer in your filing cabinet must be full of letters complaining about John Brosnan. After his column in issue 127 I felt I had to add to that list of unhappy readers who find his column a waste of space.



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P.O. BOX 371 LONDON SW14 8JL

His column is called *It's Only A Movie* so he fills space with an uncalculated all-out attack on this country's top fantasy show **Doctor Who**. I have been a fan of the series since the Jon Pertwee years and in that time I've read many letters praising and complaining about each season, Doctor, companion, producer, etc, etc. Some letters are written just to complain, others after some advice or ideas and the rest, like Mr Brosnan's column, shows that the writer is a total prat.

Why is it when somebody dislikes something, like Mr Brosnan's dislike of **Doctor Who**, they sit there and watch it. If he doesn't like it why doesn't he watch **Coronation Street**? As for his idea of a story, well that was terrible.

Perhaps the title of his column should be changed to something like 'The accounts of an ageing aussie windbag who's done nothing to make himself famous but wants to be remembered as a total prat.' Or a better idea would be just to rid an excellent magazine like *Starburst* of this waste of space.

One last point on this column is the accompanying photo. It was obviously a photo of Mr Brosnan with Dez Skinn, with a photo of Tom Baker stuck on to the top of it. It looked tacky and out of place in the magazine. I hope this type of photo never occurs again.

Editor: Whoops! Well, that was actually a genuine photo, the trouble was that when the text had been laid out we (see, team responsibility here!) discovered there was not enough space for the photo, and since John mentioned it we had to put it in. So we 'edited' it, and not too well it seems. So here is the photo again, properly printed, we hope...

Adrian Macley
Co Louth, Eire

First of all, well done to James Herbert for taking the time to write in, defending himself from

the cutting pen of John Brosnan. Having heard both sides of the story I can now comment on the offending article (Issue 125). If Mr Brosnan continues to write articles like this then maybe a move to a more suitable profession would be in order - like writing for *The Sun* for example. The article was biased and without foundation. Okay, maybe Harry Adam Knight is a good friend of Mr Brosnan's but that is no cause for what has occurred. And, having read Mr Knight's book, *Silencer*, I find it hardly surprising Mr Herbert is more successful financially. I have been purchasing *Starburst* for two years now and find the magazine informative, well laid out and well written. Yet I fear I have a criticism: not enough attention is paid to the written word. The Bookshelf column is too short. Approximately four book reviews squeezed onto two pages along with photos and sometimes advertisements isn't quite enough, when pages are wasted in a lot of issues on **** like **Doctor Who** and **Star Trek**. It is because of *Starburst* that I have 'discovered' authors like David Eddings, Robert McCammon, Iain Banks and Stephen Gallagher, to name a few. So please, even if you can't review more books, why not have longer reviews or even features on certain authors? Editor: This issue we have an interview with Stephen Donaldson, and last issue it was Anne McCaffrey's turn, so we certainly have not forgotten the written word. Sadly, though, books do not seem to hold the popularity which films and tv do, so the space given to them reflects this.

Festival Congrats

Wayne Perkins
Cheltenham, Glos
We have just returned from the first 'Black Sunday' film festival in Manchester, bleary-eyed and flat of bottom. Seventeen hours of debauchery in a packed cinema



left us exhausted but willing to return if the event becomes annual as promised.

The organisers, Malcolm English and David Bryan, should be congratulated for putting the event together, if not for their poor-man's 'Cannon and Ball' double act introducing the films through an inaudible PA system. On the plus side we got out of the Dark, Paper House, Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, Die for You, Fright Night 2, Dead Heat, Lady in White and Lair of the White Worm (the latter two stealing the show with Worm destined to become a cult fare on the late-night circuit. It's campier than a row of pink tents!). The picture and sound quality were

good, the seats comfortable (for the first four hours) and it generally had a good atmosphere throughout. It's always hard to pick faults, but if it is to become a regular event improvements can be made. The absence of any hot drinks on sale was noticeable; 17 hours without a cup of tea/coffee is unthinkable! My caffeine levels were at an all-time low I can tell you. The films were not introduced properly, a mumbled title and an odd swear word was all we got. A stall of merchandise would have been nice... But these are minor quibbles and ones I'm sure the organisers have already noted - you learn by your mistakes.

YOUNG DOCTORS in SPACE



... by Robin Evans



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Pen Pals

Lost In Space and Land of the Giants I'm keen to get in touch with fans of these series.
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Gil Gerard

A Starburst feature by Janette Hyem

In the Beverley Hills Polo lounge, Buck Rogers ordered lunch. Nothing fancy from the 25th Century, just plain old grilled breast of chicken and green leaf salad. "That sounds good to me" he said. With my order taken also, a twiki-like waiter scuttled away to do his master's bidding. Buck turned his attention to me...

FOR someone of about 545 years old Gil Gerard, alias Buck Rogers, looks remarkably young for his years. With fair hair and bright sparkling eyes, Gerard has kept the look Buck Rogers acquired from the series first brought to the screens back in 1978. Although only running for two seasons the show, written by Glen Larson for Universal, won a vocal international following. Gerard turned down the rôle twice before accepting it.

"I'd just done a pilot called *Killing Stone* for Michael Landon. The series unfortunately didn't sell and so it became a movie of the week. Then I got the offer to play

Buck Rogers, but I turned it down thinking it was a cartoon character. Well I was wrong, it wasn't at all. So I read the script and decided I liked the character, it had a good concept. I made the movie *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, and from that came a television commitment. The feature film did very well making 35 million dollars in a month. It was taken out of the theatres immediately, because the studio hadn't thought it would do well and had sold it to cable TV and so it became *Buck Rogers* the serial. Although there were only about 24 episodes made it seems to run forever. They take a couple of episodes and put them together, making a feature film once in a while. I had good fun making the series. Buck was humorous and into mischief making."

Not unlike Gil himself! One of the features of Buck Rogers were the special effects, especially 'Twiki'.

"Twiki was a little guy named Felix Silla. Right now technology has not advanced to the point where there is a fully articulated robot in existence. Felix gave Twiki his personality and Mel Blanc gave him the voice. Other effects in the show included models of the ships which were extremely expensive to make. We used to do our shots in front of a blue screen and they'd put the effects on after. Sometimes I didn't even know what I was supposed to be reacting to. You didn't know if it was twenty feet tall

or two foot. We had some funny times on that show. But I can't gripe about that to much. After all it did make me a household name. Anything else you want to know?" quips Gil as he looks longingly at his salad.

Not salad time yet Mr Gerard. Originally Gil Gerard, from Little Rock, Arkansas, was an industrial chemist. Bored with the job he went to New York to study acting and then guest starred on *Baretta* and *Hawaii 5-0*. His movies include *Airport 77*, *Hooch*, *For Love or Money*, *Storming Home* and a popular film entitled *Hear no Evil* made in 1982.

When asked what he had done since *Buck Rogers* the answer was, "I haven't worked since. Except for the movies I did with Victoria Principal and Susan Pleshette, and the two I did on my own. And then I've been broke ever since. It's a very sad story really", he said with a mischievous smile.

I mentioned a series called *Sidekicks* made in 1986. Wasn't that work?

"Oh yes, I forgot about that. It entailed 22 shows and I even directed one. But I grew away from it - literally. When I played Sgt Jacob Rizzo in it I weighed 175 lbs, and since then I've lost 75 lbs. It was a fun show but totally mismanaged by the networks and only lasted one season. A shame really, and, of course, the weight went with it."

Gil Gerard is open about the fact he put on a lot of weight a few years ago. He talks freely about OA, which stands for *Over-eaters Anonymous*. He supports them and helps OA's and AA's, and reformed drug addicts. He travels a great deal, to places like France, Greece, Italy, Germany, Malaysia, Tahiti, New Zealand, England and Switzerland - some places on business, some for pleasure. In his spare time Gil plays tennis and scuba dives for treasure. He is soon going on an archaeological dig to Brazil.

Gil has a son Glib, from his third marriage to Connie Selleca. Two of his few ambitions left are to do a musical stage show and to live a very happy life. Trying to get the most out of every day is one of Gil's targets. "Someone once said 'shoot for the stars and you may hit the Sun, aim for the Moon and you'll never get anywhere near the Sun'". A good quote for a 25th century guy.

Gerard has the same sense of humour his Buck Rogers character had. Gil's agent passes by the table shouting to him he's off to get Gil a job now "Oh good", replies Gerard. "What's it this time, not more bartending, I'd rather be a Maître D'."

One last question, would he rather play a good guy or a bad one?

"Oh a good guy, that's all I seem to get offered", he replied.

I wonder why Mr Gerard, I wonder why...



Gil Gerard as seen on BBC2 at the moment



Stephen Donaldson

A Starburst feature by John McElroy

One of the most successful epic fantasy series to appear in recent times involved the adventures of a very unlikely hero, Thomas Covenant the Leper. The mastermind behind this is Stephen Donaldson, and *Starburst* spoke to him last year about his *Covenant and Mordant's Need* series.

What made you choose a leper as the central character of your first book?

I grew up in India, where my father was

an orthopaedic missionary, and part of his work was with lepers, so the issue was a lot more familiar to me than to most people. The whole point about the Unbeliever, however, was that if you're going to write about a person who rejects fantasy then you need to write about a person for whom fantasy would be infinitely preferable to reality, because otherwise it's a meaningless assertion. Anyone who has a relatively normal life can easily take the view that fantasy is only fantasy, and that it doesn't really matter. But if you take someone who has this absolutely dreadful life, and then suddenly these wonderful healing fantasies start to happen to him, and he still clings to the superior importance of reality despite the pain, then that becomes a religious position. That's a statement about the meaning of life. As soon as I put *Leprosy and Unbelief* together then the whole project just exploded in my head. The Land, and most

of what happens in it, are just natural extrapolations of those two concepts. If you take a mirrored opposite of *Leprosy*, you'd have the sort of health that they had in the Land.

Given the pain and rejection which Covenant suffered in the real world, wouldn't he have been only too willing to accept the fantasy of the Land?

But that's the whole point. It is because Covenant struggles against it that his position is interesting and has integrity. When he finally arrives at an affirmation it means something. It wasn't just "Oh I'm happy at last - Let's all go fight Lord Foul over the weekend". That wouldn't carry any weight. Answers to people don't mean anything unless you really test them, and Covenant is tested to the core.

Was the original concept for a trilogy or did it just grow into one?

I always saw it as a trilogy. I started at the end of *The Power That Preserves* and I planned the story back to the beginning of *Lord Foul's Bane*, and then began writing. And I did the same with the second trilogy, so that in each case the story was the way I intended it to be from the very beginning.

So was it the success of the first trilogy which prompted the second?

No, I actually started to write the second series before the first one was published. As I was working on the final draft of *The Power That Preserves*, I realised that I was dissatisfied by the resolution of the story. I felt that although we had arrived at a solution to the problem of Lord Foul, it should be pushed to a deeper level.

Your output has been high compared with a lot of novelists.

It has averaged out to a book every 18 months. It's full time work, and I was very productive in the early days. I've slowed down a bit now - life has become a lot more





complicated. I always bristle at the term 'prolific' - I know some writers that turn out a book a month, and I ain't one of them!

Do you edit heavily, or does it go straight down on the page?

Re-writing is the only way you learn, but also re-writing is the only way you can keep control of your material. The act of writing is for me a very subjective experience, I potentially try and become all the characters; see what they see, feel what they feel and have the same emotions. That can be very fruitful, but it doesn't lend itself to control, and at some point it is the communicator's responsibility to be in control of their material.

What were the readers' reaction to Thomas Covenant?

Many people seem to read the material in spite of Thomas Covenant. They cannot understand why he won't make up his mind and go and behave in a simple-minded fashion. For the person that was raised on Conan the Barbarian this is what they expect. One of the reasons I wrote a character like Hile Troy was to try to suggest the dangers of that sort of simple-minded answer. Others think that Covenant represents a believable hope for the World. If this pained and lonely and lost individual can find heroism in his own heart, then we can all hope to do the same.

Why did you introduce Linden Avery in the second Trilogy?

We had already had Covenant versus Lord Foul for three long books. How else could I make the battle seem more important, more profound? The whole second chronicles is organised in couples, and is essentially a story about how the bond between two people gives you an answer to a threat that no individual can manage alone.

Do you have any plans to write further Thomas Covenant books?

I do have a really grand idea for what I call **The Last Chronicles**, and it would be the closest thing to what I can envisage as the ultimate answer to Covenant's struggle against Despite. Covenant is clearly not a physically material Being at the end of **White Gold Wielder**. On the other hand

the Second Chronicles had worked very hard to establish the connection between the dead and the living. In **The Last Chronicles** there would definitely be access between the two planes. Thomas Covenant will definitely not be presiding over the story as a shadowy figure in the heavens. I promised myself that since I spent ten years writing the first six books I must leave it at least another ten before writing the last. I know the story, and it will be technically very difficult to write. It will make the previous books look like playing around.

Have you read a lot of Fantasy books?

As a child, growing up in India, and we got an extremely erratic supply of books. I read everything I could get my hands on. Now the Fantasy I read I respond to, but up until High School that was limited to the **Chronicles of Narnia** by C S Lewis. I stumbled by accident when I was at graduate school on Mervyn Peake's **Gormenghast** books. Everyone that was going to school in the 60's read **Lord of the Rings**, and somebody told me about Frank Herbert's **Dune**, and that was the extent of my reading in this field by the time that the Covenant books had been published.



Mordant's Need

How do you perceive Mordant's Need as differing from the Covenant books?

There was a lot more humour in **Mordant's Need**. One of the running gags in the books was that Erimis never actually gets there, despite his increasingly frantic seductions. Eventually they turn into actual rapes, but he still can't make it happen. Finally, Terisa gets the perfect revenge when Erimis ends up paralysed, just as he is 'poised for action'.

The concept of Terisa returning to her New York apartment towards the end of A Man Rides Through was very unusual. Why?

It was obvious from the outset that Terisa would be staying with Geraden, but I didn't want to leave the problems she had in her old life unresolved. It seemed better for her to resolve them directly, rather than to



simply have a chapter at the end of the book in which 'she thought about her father and decided that he no longer had any power over her'. That would have been drivel.

Are we likely to see the further adventures of Terisa and Geraden?

No, it seems satisfactory to me as it stands. I might someday write a book set in the same land if an idea occurred to me, but it would be a totally story, not a continuation.

What other books are you working on?

Most people don't know that I also write crime novels using the pseudonym Reed Stephens. I like to write one after each big Fantasy project, **The Man Who Killed His Brother** and **The Man Who Risked His Partner** are already available in paperback, and I have just finished writing the third one, which should be published towards the end of 1989. I anticipate that my next big project will be a five volume Science Fiction work. The working titles being: **The Real Story**, **Strange Dreams**, **A Dark and Hungry God Arises**, **Chaos and Order** and **All Gods Die**. However, as with all books a lot can happen between their conception and publication, and so these titles, and indeed even the number of books in the series, could easily change.



Edited by David Howe
Our first book this month is
one which, when you read it,
you just know is destined for
classic status.

LIGHTNING

By Dean R Koontz
Published by Headline Books
439pp £3.50 p/b

It is said that lightning never strikes the same place twice, but in the case of Laura Shane this couldn't be more untrue. During the course of her life she has seen lightning flickering both overhead and in the distance, and each time it heralds an event of great significance which, if not for the intervention of a mysterious 'guardian angel', would drastically alter the course of her life. The enigmatic blonde haired man was even instrumental in her very existence, preventing a drunken sot of a doctor from attending her birth during which there were complications resulting in the death of her mother. Laura however survived, which she would not have done had the drunken doctor been allowed to attend.

What is this stranger's interest in Laura and how does he know exactly where and when in her life she will be placed in danger? More to the point, why does he never change his appearance despite assisting Laura over the first thirty or so years of her life? The answer to these questions is both surprising and original and provides the basis for *Lightning*.

Lightning is a remarkable novel from a remarkable author. Despite its epic scope - the entire life of Laura Shane - Koontz manages to keep your attention riveted to the page. The ideas and concepts presented to explain Laura's guardian and the final denouement are a masterpiece of storytelling, as indeed is the entire structure of the book. Koontz has a talent for making you care for his characters,

so much so that emotions come flooding off the page and into the reader as the plot unfolds; happiness, fear, suspense, sadness, vengeance - all are here.

Koontz deserves to join the best-selling ranks of King and Herbert with this book. It has an appeal way beyond that of a simple Horror or Fantasy novel; this is a love story and a mystery and a fantasy all rolled into one. It has been said before that Koontz writes in a genre which can only be described as Koontz. To enter if you have to read his books, and I recommend that you do so, soon.

David Howe

From one classic book to another. Clive Barker seems to have been around forever, and yet his latest offering is only his third novel.

CABAL

By Clive Barker
Published by Fontana Books
268pp £2.95 p/b

Cabal is an interesting book, both in concept and content. It is the first of a proposed trilogy of tales (as indeed is Barker's next novel, *The Art*, due out in hardback in August) concerning the fall and rise of a race of beings who call themselves the Nighbreed.

These creatures are, or at least appear to be, based on the standard concepts of vampire and

werewolf - shapechanging powerful creatures who can 'infect' others with a bite and who cannot survive in sunlight. This aspect of them is very derivative, however in Barker's hands they transcend this and are both horrific and fascinating.

The story told in *Cabal* is Boone's story. He is, or so doctor Decker tells him, a multiple murderer, a multitator of humans. Boone is unsure of all this - he cannot really remember committing the crimes he is charged with but becomes convinced that he is the culprit as there seems no other option. In despair he throws himself under a truck - only to survive. It is while in hospital that he first meets the obsessed Narcisse and becomes aware of the place called Midian - a sanctuary for the hopeless and wasted, where all sins will be forgiven. Boone determines to travel to Midian and what he finds there and how it affects his life forms the basis for the *Cabal* series.

Cabal is already in production as a film (called *Nighbreed* and starring David Cronenberg [yes, that David Cronenberg] as Decker together with Marc Almond and Suzie Quatro) and the next two instalments have been commissioned by Collins Books (as have two sequels to *The Art*).

Cabal is a good novel, perhaps not as original as some of Barker's other material, but streets ahead of most other horror authors today

David Howe

From Horror to Science Fiction, and we look at the third in a new series of novels from the prolific pen of Jack L Chalker.

WARRIORS OF THE STORM

by Jack L Chalker
Published by New English Library
336pp £2.99 p/b

The Rings of the Master is a new venture which gives Chalker the excuse to indulge once again in what seems to be his favourite theme: the creation of exotic peoples and cultures via ultra-sophisticated technology. This worked excellently in his *Five Walls of Souls* books but I rather think the idea has out-stayed its welcome, resulting in repetition which tends to induce a large yawn instead of riveted attention.

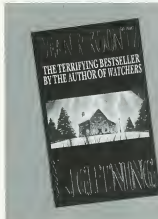
The Rings of the Master series embraces the usual space opera subject of a totalitarian system controlled by a master computer which is protected by a multitude of complex safeguards. Someone finds out he is being manipulated, gets together with some of the more discerning and brilliant minds in the universe and embarks on a crusade to liberate the ignorant masses from the stifling regime. Of course, this is all very familiar material, and although it is sometimes lifted by Chalker's inventiveness it falls down on several occasions where mere platitudes are expressed in exchange for what, with more thought, could have been some very incisive dialogue. There are also five rings which when found, stolen and used correctly have the power to access the computer program and break its monopoly over human development. Once again we are back to the prosaic and predictable. Why is there this obsession with rings? Nowadays I would be more impressed if someone were to seek ten lords-a-leasing or a partridge in a pear tree.

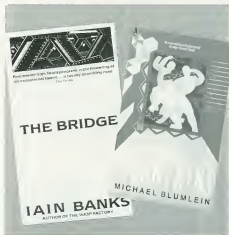
Over the months that I have been reading this series I have developed a love-hate relationship with it. On the one hand it is good adventure and the plots are interesting enough to keep you thinking, but on the other hand there is a great deal of banality, and I don't have much sympathy for the protagonists for the simple but ultimately very important reason that I would not be overly upset if any of them met with a premature demise. The entire project seems over-long (here is book three and so far only two of the five rings have been recovered) and it suffers from the rather curious mix of the bite and intricate. I would have welcomed this series much more warmly had it confined itself to a trilogy.

Deanne Holding

Next up a quick look at a book which has been available for

BOOKSHELF





some time.

THE BRIDGE

By Iain Banks
Published by Future Books
206pp £4.99 p/b

The Bridge was Iain Banks' third novel, published in hardback by MacMillan in 1986 and then as an obscure paperback by Pan in 1987. It has now been picked up by Futura and re-issued to match his

other novels, *The Wasp Factory*, *Walking on Glass* and *Espedair Street* (Not a genre novel this last one, but a superb read none the less - it is the author which makes a good book, not the subject matter).

Those of you that missed this brilliant and inspired novel the first time around can now rush out and buy it. It tells the story of a man known as John Orr in a place known as the Bridge. He has

strange dreams, nightmares and hallucinations and seems to re-live the lives of someone half remembered and almost normal and a Scottish barbarian (these sections are written as the barbarian's account sounds which makes for interesting, if bewildering, reading).

Who John Orr is, what the Bridge is, and how he will get back to 'real life' form the basis of this compulsive, convoluted and fascinating novel. Like Banks' other work, *The Bridge* is well written, enjoyable and highly original. Buy it today
David Howe

Finally, a first novel from someone to be watched in the future.

THE MOVEMENT OF MOUNTAINS

By Michael Blumlein
Published by New English Library
289pp £2.99 p/b

For a first novel, *The Movement of Mountains* is very impressive. It is written in the first person of Doctor Jules Ebert who administers his patients in some futuristic city where specially engineered dogs eat waste plastic, where sexual promiscuity is the norm and where there are the first signs of an AIDS-type viral disease.

Ebert is persuaded by his lover, Jessica, to follow her to the planet of Eridis where a miracle drug is mined by the Domers, huge obese creatures, genetically created by the mining company to withstand the harsh and demanding mining conditions. What Ebert discovers on Eridis amounts to slavery of the highest degree and he is torn between his duty as a doctor, to try to improve the Domers' lot, and the entrenched system which governs the planet.

Although a little predictable, it is very well written and structured, and progresses to a logical conclusion. At its most basic it is about sex and sexual awakening but doesn't bother looking for the 'naughty bits' because there aren't any - what there is is an enjoyable and entertaining read.
David Howe

Finally, a small correction. In issue 126 I reviewed a book called *Gastlight and Ghosts*. Unfortunately the Christmas gremlins got in and I mistakenly said that Clive Barker's contribution was a poem from *Weaseworld*. In fact Barker contributed a chapter from *Cabal*, one of the best stand-alone pieces from that novel. My apologies to all concerned and for any confusion I may have generated.

David Howe

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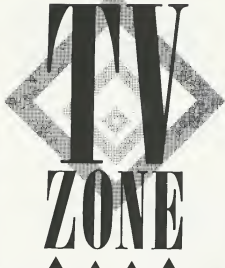
By Paul Mount

Just when you thought it was safe to turn on your TV; just when you thought there was really no chance at all of any *Robin Of Sherwood* repeats; just when you thought things were looking good for TV fantasy shows, along comes *Superboy* and brings the whole deck of cards crashing down around your ears.

Even by the staggeringly-low standards of American 'fantasy' TV, *Superboy* is in a class of its own. There's so much wrong with this tawdry half-hour of ephemeral nonsense - from its basic concept right down through its production and way beyond - that one TV Zone columnist is barely enough to even begin to catalogue its ineptitude. But you know me; I'll give it my best shot.

It's not that the theme music and title sequence are so monumentally unspectacular, or that the video effects are a new low in television visuals, or that the acting is at best execrable or that the plots are so lightweight they seem to drift into the ether before your very eyes; what rankles most about *Superboy* is that stubbornly dumb-headed anachronistic setting. Having somehow managed to 'sell' the dodgy premise of a series based on the adventures of a young Superman, the kind-hearted but soft-brained Salkinds proceeded to set the whole thing in contemporary America, expecting the audience to genuinely forget that their (and Cannon's) Superman films are also set in contemporary America! Thus we're expected to believe and accept the fact that Clark Kent junior and his chums inhabit the same world as the same time as Clark Kent senior and pals. This is just too much to swallow and it practically chokes me.

So where can we go from here when an entire series is built on a



premise which just can't stand up? Things can only get worse, and they do. As we realise that the first UK episode, *Countdown to Nowhere* (what does this expression actually mean?), is written by Fred Freiberger, the man who assassinated *Star Trek* and *Space 1999* we fear the worst, and get much more. From start to finish, week after week, this is utter garbage - the debris of the TV industry. John Haymes Newton may well fill his *Superboy* costume adequately but he can't act his way out of a crumpled cape - but then he's in good company. There's no spark between these 'characters' (a word I use guardedly in this context), no sense of genuine camaraderie to suggest that they could possibly enjoy an existence outside these

weedy adventures. In one thrilling instalment we meet the evil Lex Luthor, who is now a rich student hanging around swimming pools with scantily-clad young men and rigging baseball matches. It's strange really because ten years earlier an adult Lex Luthor, looking remarkably like Gene Hackman, was planning to destroy America and teaming up with criminals from the Phantom Zone.

If I have to commend the series at all - and I don't have to - then I'll have to admit that some of the flying sequences are passable. Newton at least looks like a superhero even if his antics are more suited to *Head Of The Class*. Ironically, like the old George Reeve series which now seems like a masterpiece of television in com-

parison, *Superboy* barely appears and when he does he makes a jerk of himself.

Really can't condemn *Superboy* enough - and by the same token I also have to heartily recommend it. In recent months we've been spoilt for choice with some top-notch off-the-wall fantasy shows heralding a new era for the genre on TV. *Superboy* will stand as a landmark in truly terrible television, a wonderful reminder that whilst Britain is pressing on with bold new styles, over in America they're still happily churning out the dross as quickly and as cheaply as possible. I've had quite enough of *Superboy* but if you haven't caught up with it yet then you really must. It's an experience quite unlike any other.

STARCROSSED

And just to prove that my knife is not always ready to be plunged deep into the quivering back of American television, I'll pause to doff my TV Zone's hat in the general direction of *Starcrossed*, a recent untypical entrant into Channel Four's rent-a-issue Monday night TV movie slot. Instead of the usual parade of dying parents/children/young sports-people/small furry animals etc, which dominate this slot, *Starcrossed*, 1985 reworking of *Starman*, was an intelligent and highly watchable soft-focus Science-Fiction saga of an alien woman on the run from two hefty alien aggressors out for her blood.

Belinda Bauer stars as Mary? (a runaway alien from a distant planet pursued to Earth by a couple of extra-terrestrial thugs who want to drag her back to her planet, which their race have invaded, to make an example of her. Luckily for her, she meets (and falls in love with) smart-assed garage mechanic Joey (James Spader) who befriends, protects and finally loves her. *Starcrossed* is American Science Fiction with a difference; here Joey is no crusading reporter or sophisticated city businessman. He's a simple manual worker who rapidly finds himself way out of his depth as Mary tells him about her home planet and as he's chased through the streets by two mule aliens wielding ferocious death rays. There's a simplistic message, too; Mary may be an alien but, *Starcrossed* seems to be telling us, we're all the same wherever we're from. And if something's worth fighting for - something you really believe in - then it's always worth standing and fighting. Joey learns tolerance from Mary, she learns strength from Joey; she ups and leaves in her glowing tubular spaceship to stand up for her own people on her own planet and Joey is left with the alien wisdom she's bequeathed to him. It's unusual - almost unnerving - to find yourself being preached at by an American TV movie but *Starcrossed* turned the trick with an unexpected flair and style.

'Starcrossed' - Belinda Bauer and James Spader





ISSUE 68 A photo feature on The Doctor. The banned Star Trek episode (part 1). Costume designer Emma Pearce. The Tardis. Like John Sherry interviewed The Black Gash and Doctor Who on video.



ISSUE 69 Lafferty: Back to the Future. Amazing Star Trek: The making of BBC's Alien in Wonderland. On location with the Tardis. Yoni Lombari talks about the funny side of Blake's Seven.



ISSUE 90 Film of 82 reviewed. The Doctor and Doctor in Basic. Computer Special Effects. Black Aster. 1969. Tardis. Women Brothers and Back to the Future colour section added.



ISSUE 91 Time Travel Special. Timepods. The Time Machine. Sapphires and Steel (one travel on TV, including the Doctor). Re-Armistice Producer Brian Yulish. Interview. Doctor's features. Fight Night. Review. Williams. Peter West. The Staff previewed.



ISSUE 92 Robin of Sherwood. Looking back, and towards season three. Was Oliver looks about his experience on Elm Street. Film of 92. Phil Bards. Preview of Jewel of the Nile. Young Sherlock Holmes. DART. and Zone Troopers. Features on Doctor Who. The Street. The Champions and Return of the Arkangel.



ISSUE 93 (short supply) C2 Jason Connery. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Interview. Jewel of the Nile. Fight Night. and Zone Troopers features. Preview of Flesh and Blood. The Mother. The Girl of the Cave. Best. My Son. Doctor Who. The Legend of John and Sherry. Return of the Jedi on video.



ISSUE 94 (very short supply) E10. Leading fantasy artist Chris Achilleos. Clon of the Cave. Star Trek upstart. Michael Westman interview. Acroming Super-Ted. Peter Coughlin's life in Fantasy. A look at P. Every. Mike. Star. Clon and House previewed. The Rocky Horror Picture Show premiere. Gary on. John the Layman. Interview.



ISSUE 95 (short supply) C2 90. Interview with Jodi Tritt. Marion in Robert of Sherwood. Doctor Who director. Wholly. Preview. Highlighted. Star. and Explains preview. An early look out of Star Trek IV. Review and background to Every. Mike. The Greatest. American. Hero. Interview. Norman. Time. Ready of the Paper. The NPT. TV. 50. Week. and



ISSUE 96 Into a Land of Star Trek and Low. Gossard. Every. Mike. Interview. Highlighted. and Review. Interview. Fantasy. Open. and more on Fantasy. Time.



ISSUE 97 (very short supply) E10. After director interviewed. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 98 (short supply) C2 90. After director interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 99 (short supply) C2 90. Special celebration issue. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 100 (short supply) C2 90. Special celebration issue. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 101 Second celebration issue. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 102 (short supply) C2 90. The Fly. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 103 Special preview of Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. 7. Star Trek. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 104 (short supply) C2 90. The making of Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 105 (short supply) C2 90. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 106 (short supply) C2 90. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 107 (short supply) C2 90. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 108 (short supply) C2 90. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



ISSUE 109 (short supply) C2 90. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



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ISSUE 112 (short supply) C2 90. Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Interview. Interview. Features on Doctor Who. Worlds Beyond. Fantasy. Interview. Doctor. Interview. From. Mike. and. Danny. World. Preview. F10. Interview. John. Preview. Master. to the Coast. and Day of the Dead.



25
YEARS



Sue Moore, Stephen Mansfield and Vis FX Assistant 'Rocky'

BIZARRE CREATURES

A *Starburst* feature by Jan Vincent-Rudzki
and David Richardson

Susan Moore and Stephen Mansfield are rising names in the field of special effects props and costume-making. They have both worked on the recent series of *Spitting Image* as puppet-makers,

and provided an array of bizarre creatures for the anniversary season of *Doctor Who*.

The pair first drew attention after their magnificent contribution to the 1987 season of *Doctor Who*, and particularly the melting head of Kane in the

The many 'faces' of Fili



story *Dragonfire*. Having established a reputation, Susan and another colleague, Robert Allsopp, approached BBC costume designer Rosalind Ebbutt, who was just starting work on *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy*. Robert, under the supervision of the Martin Adams Workshop, had made the Doctor's umbrella for the previous season, and Susan was keen to gain more experience in costume work. Rosalind hired them to make three copies of the pendant which would be worn by Deadbeet. One was to be the original, one to cover the possibility of theft, and one to throw down the well.

These were delivered for the location recording, at which point they were offered the job of making the costumes for the Gods of Ragnarok. Susan recalls, "Ros had a very strong idea of how the Gods should look. She gave us drawings and we were not allowed to deviate at all. The costumes were made from foam that the BBC supplied, which we cut up and covered with latex. We roughened up the foam and painted it over to give it a stone finish. The costumes had to look as though they were part of the set, although they ended up a bluey-green colour, while the set was grey-brown. Ultimately they blended very successfully".

The bodies were handled mainly by Robert, while Susan concentrated on the hands, feet and helmets. "The helmets were latex over the top of Samco, which is



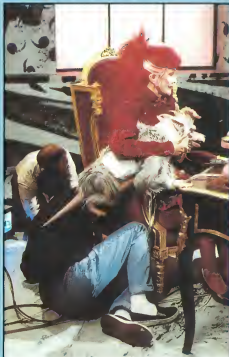
an acetone-based fibre that goes rock-hard. I had to get the eye symbol right, which Ros had based on the symbols from Greek ships - Ray Harryhausen style. The gloves were just the usual domestic rubber gloves, with foam stuck over them and latex sculptured.

"We did the fittings in filming breaks during earlier recording. The child God was

ultimately played by a different actress from the one we'd originally measured so that one was made last and altered." Susan and Robert were given three weeks to make the Gods, although at one stage it looked as though the programme was to be cancelled because of the asbestos scare at TV Centre.

Susan says of the shooting at Elstree,

Steve getting right into the part!



The Pipe People





The gods of Ragnarok

where the recording was transferred to. "The heat was unbelievable because they had lined the tent with orange plastic walls to soundproof it. The actors in the God suits were allowed to take their helmets off between takes, but poor Sylvester had to do a scene hanging upside down in a straight-jacket!"

The entire set was rigged to collapse, and was to be triggered by the Visual Effects people. "We all ran out when they were doing that!" Susan says. "While we were all saying 'Bye then!', Sylvester drew up a chair and sat about four feet away because he trusted that the Visual Effects people knew what they were doing. It took ages for the whole thing up because it was so fragile. One of the pillars came crashing down, and we thought 'OH MY GAWD!' but it stopped just exactly where they said it was going to. The smoke was unbelievable, the whole tent was filled with dust."

Susan was just completing her work on *Greatest Show* when a call came through from Effects Designer Perry Braha, suggesting that she and Stephen might like to provide a puppet creature for *The Happiness Patrol*. Stephen was busy at *Spitting Image* during the daytime, so Susan attended the initial production meeting and came away with a bag of scripts.

The script described the creature: Fifi as "a small, evil-looking creature reminiscent of a particularly nasty alien ferret." Says

Stephen, "We adhered to the description as far as possible, bearing in mind we had to make a realistic-looking, believable creature. We didn't want something so artificial looking that it drew attention from the main players. We also had to produce an effective puppet, so there were technical reasons for parts of the design."

Susan continues, "We decided that as Helen A loved this thing so much, it had obviously been with her for a long time. It was probably quite upset when it was young, but now it's got all fat and manky. I wasn't sure about having it that pinky colour, but Stephen was keen that we shouldn't make it fire-engine red or green or brown."

Stephen laughs. "It's just that although greens and browns are up to a point the most reliable colours you can use, because they're the most natural, they seem to get over-used. I just felt that the pinky mauve colour would represent that nasty raw look that clipped fox-pooches have, as well as creating a slightly less common colour scheme."

The idea of employing a clipped, patchy look for the fur was a practical as well as aesthetic one. It meant that the fur could be applied indiscriminately to disguise joints and conceal arm/leg joints, and yet still leave areas of flesh and bone visible. "We didn't want to end up with a ball of fur," says Susan.

The size of the creature was a major concern for Moore and Mahfield. It had to be

small enough to make a believable lap dog for Helen A, yet still look sufficiently ferocious in the pipe sequences. As Susan says: "All you had to do was kick the thing in the head. We wanted to convey that it wasn't so much the size, but the speed and viciousness of it, like a pair of teeth on legs."

The FX designer allocated a substantial part of his budget to the creation of Fifi. They obviously wanted to make sure it looked right, Stephen believes. "We duly went to town on it. With a puppet, in order to make it believable and entertaining, you have to keep the mind the people who are watching it. Had it just sat on Helen A's lap it would have got boring very quickly, so we had it on different surfaces. Viewers aren't dead and they'll eventually cotton on that Fifi must be a puppet, particularly the younger ones. They subconsciously start wondering how it's being worked... where does the hand go in etc. Our job is to suspend this disbelief as long as possible, to keep on deceiving."

We had various versions of the puppet that did different things. There were two heads and three bodies. The main head blinked, looked around, snarled, furrowed its brows, moved its ears and raised the horns on top of its head. The secondary head only looked around and blinked. Of the three bodies the soft, floppy one was used the most, while the glass-fibre rodged version was only used for the pipe scenes.

The last one was mounted on a trolley device, which moved the legs as you pulled it along with a fishing line. This was used once - again in a pipe sequence."

Stephen's work for **Spitting Image** proved beneficial to the Fili puppet, as he was permitted to use some of the facilities of their workshop. "I spoke to Roger Law who runs the workshop, and explained what I wanted to do. He said it was fine so long as it was done out of regular hours. We got the heads made in good quality foam latex, with the help of some very experienced people. The glass-fibre piece-mould was made by Johnny Stubbenhagen, and the foams were by James Sunderland, both of whom really put a lot of effort in. I then made the mechanisms, which were roughly based on the type used in the **Spitting Image** puppets - very simple, but incredibly durable and effective.



With Stephen still busy during the day on the **Spitting Image** series, it was down to Susan to attend rehearsals with a dummy Fili for the actors to run through with.

"It was quite hard work! Sheila Hancock was very good, though. She treated the dummy as though it were a real animal, rather than merely a prop. Her reactions to it actually gave it more life than anything we could do with the puppet. In the show it certainly was at its best with her."

In the studio, the puppet was controlled by four people, mostly crouching in awkward positions next to Miss Hancock. Stephen explains, "The studios aren't ideal for puppets, and so to conceal myself and the other operators we used a combination of video effects and plain old gymnastics. Sheila Hancock was a fantastic sport - in spite of the weight of the puppet, the trailing cables and pipes, and the presence of the operators around her she was as cool as ever! At one point she suggested that she could well be the new Rod Hull and Emma.

In the end Susan and Stephen were fair-



ly happy with the Fili puppet. It was the first time a puppet character had been used so extensively in **Doctor Who**. The pair were given a lot of support from Perry Braham, director Chris Clough and producer John Nathan-Turner, but couldn't expect special treatment from the production as a whole. As Stephen explains, "With something like **The Storyteller** or **Spitting Image**, the programme revolves around the puppets. Fili was just an accessory."

As Stephen was juggling his time between his **Spitting Image** commitments and Fili, Susan was able to help make-up designer Dorka Nieradzik out with some masks for the Pipe People, also from **The Happiness Patrol**. "Originally the Pipe People were going to be the puppets, and Fili was going to be, among other things, a dog dressed up. Then they decided that so many puppets would be a problem, so they then thought of having dwarves dressed as Pipe People, but finally settled on children. I thought it would be best to give them Friedlander-type half-masks; to go back to the old tradition of the Draconians and Ogrons etc.

I did a sculpture and took Polaroids for

Dorka's approval, and they were done as slip-on masks with foam inserts. Dorka supplied the necks and hair-pieces. I gave them large eyes because they wouldn't be able to see much down in the pipes. They were originally going to be albinos, but the white hair and pink eyes would have caused problems. So we went for black eyes, the idea also being that, like a rodent's eyes, you don't register the movement, and so we wouldn't need to incorporate any mechanics in the masks. Unfortunately this did make them look more sinister than was originally intended."

"I did them very cheaply, they were nice and simple, and I thought they didn't work too badly, as masks go. Apparently they've gone down quite well, so maybe it'll encourage them to use more masks next year."

Both Susan and Stephen are currently working on other projects. Given the opportunity, would they like to do more **Doctor Who** work? "Of course! **Doctor Who** is great fun, and the work, by virtue of the nature of the programme, is always a challenge. And apart from anything else, they're a nice bunch of people."



By Geoff Simm

Plenty of videos for you this month, so a smaller type size. Magnifying glasses at the ready.

ALIEN (18)

CBS/FOX

In Space no one can hear you scream. But your chest splattering open makes a nice squelching noise in hi-fi stereo! One of the tensest genre movies ever and one of Ridley Scott's better efforts.
Released: February 5th £9.99

ALIENS (18)

CBS/FOX

Sigourney in the sequel. Following The Terminator, director James Cameron turned this into a gun-toting feminist western in Space.
Released: February 5th £9.99

BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS (PG)

WARNER

The magnificent seven space warriors join forces to battle Sader, the arch-villain of the universe as we know it, and his evil girlfriend Sheila Covatta, in the star wars saga to end all star wars sagas based on The Seven Samurai.
Released: March 17th £9.99

BAY COVE (15)

SONY

So this is what happened to Dynasty's Fallon after the UFO transformed her into Emma Samra! Pamela Sue Martin and Tim Matheson settle in mythic Bay Cove away from the city rat race, only to find the locals are nuts, too. In fact, they're all members of the same witchy coven. Jeepers!
Released: March 20th

BLOOD ONER (18)

VESTRON

Spool horror on the menu as the Tumbler brothers use their roadside diner to collect bats of customers to create a female Frankenstein-type special dish. Not as pungent as it sounds, perhaps. "Water, there's a **** in my soup!" Lucky you!
Assembled: March 20th

DAMNEN - OMEN II (18)

CBS/FOX

The first time was only a warning. Second instalment in the Omen trilogy continues Damien Thorn's rise to power as the Anti-Christ, with horns budding. (Cut 666 for Evil).
Released: March 5th £9.99

ORACULA (PG)

CIC

The famous Bela Lugosi 'delirious' performance in Tod Browning's classic version (1931) of Bram Stoker's brilliant novel about Transylvanian bats turning up in London bellies, complete with fly-munching Renfield and, of course, the unflappable Prof Van Helsing.
Released: March 6th £9.99

ORACULA'S DAUGHTER (PG)

CIC

1935 sequel to the Lugosi original, but without The Master. The Count's offspring poses as the beautiful Countess Szeseley (Gloria Holden) with a penchant for female victims.
Released: March 6th £9.99

ENEMY MINE (15)

CBS/FOX

Dennis Quaid is marooned on a desert planet with an alien Lou Gossett Jr.
Released: February 5th £9.99

VIDEOFILE



'Dracula' - Tales from the crypt?

THE ENTITY (18)

CBS/FOX

Barbara Hershey writhes around suggestively as she is raped repeatedly by an invisible presence. Is she serene - or extremely randy? A lesser actress might have looked just plain stupid - but Hershey pulls it off, as there. Based on a true, documented case of demonic possession.
Released: March 5th £9.99

THE EVIL BELOW (18)

CINEPLEX

"You're in deep water, mate!" From the depths of a lakeside it screams its awakening. Wayne Crawford both directs and stars in this underwater shocker that might have you grabbing for the oxygen mask or drive you round the bend.
Breathes deeply: April 5th

THE FINAL CONFLICT (18)

CBS/FOX

The power of Evil is no longer in the hands of a child. The last part of the

Omen trilogy has Sam Neill as the now-thrifty anti-Christ Damien Thorn, politically mooted to take over the world as American ambassador to London with an eye on the US Presidency. Anything's better than Ronnie Reagan, let's face it.
Insatigated: March 5th £9.99

FRANKENSTEIN GENERAL HOSPITAL (15)

VRGIN

Feeling like death? Then this one's for you. The Sale of the Surgery! Patients are just dying to get theatre tickets. There's special reductions on amputations. Up to 50% extra off! And a new Same Day organ transplant service. Makes a new person feel like you'll bot an arm and a leg the publicity's funnier than the film in stitches: March 24th

FROM BEYOND (18)

VESTRON

Cult horror in an outrageous vein. The Re-Animator team return to HP Lovecraft territory as director Stuart

Gordon tries one of several hands at finding a sixth sense via more extremely messy laboratory experiments. Try cutting out someone else's tongue and sticking it in your cheek!
Released: March 20th £9.99

GOTHIC (18)

VRGIN

Another Ken Russell, just prior to him going even cheaper and tackier with his later works. The first of several rotten eggs to follow.
Released: March 23rd £9.99

HAUNTED HONEYMOON (PG)

PARKFIELD

Comedy chiller (for that, read *paperco* from) in which radio star and groom-to-be Larry Abbott (Gene Wilder, also directing) undergoes a night of terror in an old dark house, to cure him of his phobias, as his psychiatrist confronts him with a series of shocking situations. Unfortunately, this coincides with Larry's engagement party. As he's marrying Gloria Radner, more shocks are obviously in store. Like Dom DeLuise in drag...
Released: March 23rd £9.99

HEADHUNTER (18)

CINEPLEX

Born in hell: Unleashed on Earth. Now he walks among us. Evil is alive. Another of Wayne Crawford's efforts has a sword-wielding psycho-fingy on the loose in New York. So what else is new? The last time I was on 9th Avenue...
Released: April 5th

HIGH SCHOOL SPIRITS (18A)

CINEPLEX

Woooooh! Looking for ghosts can be a shocking experience. (And not the dreaded recent Neil Jordan eerily titled *House* (though it might confuse it with last month, as I said). This is a campus folk pressed with *Ghostbusters*. A couple of stiff ones might help you through it...
Released: March 15th

HOWLING III - THE MARSUPIALS (18)

PRESIDENT

So-called sequel, a second go at it by director Philippe Mora, after Joe Dante's horror spoof original. This time the setting is Down Under where werewolf Imogen Annesley gives birth to a cuddly creature that lives in a pouch on her belly. Whatever won't they think of next? What about a man who turns into a woman and becomes a housewife megastar overnight? Dame Barry Humphries, inevitably possums, cameras.
Animated/sized: April 5th

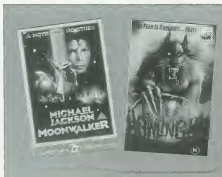
THE JEWEL OF THE NILE (PG)

Conjunction sequel to You-know-what with the already sexy Kathleen Turner.
Released: February 5th £9.99

MOONWALKER (PG)

GUILD

One of the longest pop-promos ever made features the creature from the Ministry of Silly Walks, the multi-millionaire who has done more for plastic surgery and chimpanzees than Burt Reynolds himself. This is no Thriller by any stretch of the imagination. (Screenwriter) It's a cobbled together 'version' of the *Bad* album, a 'mystical tour-de-force', with the title track being performed by a mini-Michael Jackson (Screenwriter) and a gang of 'savants' - presumably his target audience. A few live concert extras are thrown in for good measure to pad it out. The special effects are a



let-down considering the budget was enough to feed the whole of India ten times over. And the anti-drug morality fable is a goggle. Michael Jackson (Scream/Scream) stars as Mr. Squeaky Clean. Mu-released-ED: April 13th

MORTUARY ACADEMY (18) FUTURISTIC

Where the dearly departed meet the clearly retarded. When the brothers Grimm inherit the family mortician's business from an eccentric uncle there's a catch - they must graduate from the Academy first. Black comedy directed by Michael Schepeler and starring cult-director Paul (Eating Raoul) Bartel, with Christopher Atkins and others whose careers needed touching up. Released: March 17th

THE MUMMY (PG) CIC

The 1932 classic has a heavily bandaged Boris Karloff playing the high priest of Ancient Egypt in cult brought back to life after thousands of years. He thinks co-star Zita Johanna is a reincarnation of an ancient male. Unwound: March 8th £9.99

THE MUMMY'S HAND (PG) CIC

Not a sequel to the above. This 1940 blackish comedy concerns the lost tomb of an Egyptian princess uncovered by archaeologists, who get more than they bargained for. It's all guarded by Hemed, last of the high priests, still living - and very deadly. First of the 'Kharis' series, it spans three sequels. Embalmed: March 8th £9.99

MY DEMON LOVER (15) RCA/COLUMBIA

Romantic fantasy with high school monster transformations whenever 'Dr. Jekyll' Kiz is sexually aroused by a woman. Denny is the girl who tries to tame her 'Mr Hyde', and bring out the beast, sorry, best in her man. Cursed: March 17th

THE NEVERENDING STORY (U) WARNER

Wolfgang Petersen (currently shooting one of several Phantom of the Opera) version of Michael Ende's best selling novel about young Bastian who discovers the book in a weird bookstore and enters its pages, and its adventures. Nice little title tune from Limahl/Gongoro Morador. Released: March 17th £9.99

THE OMEN (18) CBS/FOX

Richard Dour helps birth the anti-Christ in the peace and quiet of an English country estate in 1978, but of American parentage (Gregory Peck and Lee Remick). See, the Italians are right after all! The little devil is a right apollin prig. Successful shocker - with a now-famous early deconstruction scene which spawned two inferior sequels. Released: March 8th £9.99

ONE MILLION YEARS BC (TBA) WARNER

The classic shot of Raquel Welch as Loana made the front page of every magazine in the world - and her a star. The film created a fashion for fur bikinis, and has since been banned by Linn and all Animal Libbers everywhere. Hammer's 100th film production is a beauty pre-historic Romeo & Juliet romp has Ray Harryhausen in stop-motion dinosaurs, prehistoric and John Richardson, too. Released: March 17th £9.99



'Star Trek: 11001001' - The Captain examines the Byrnes

PEE WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE (U) WARNER

Tim (Beetlejuice/Batman) Burton's break-through movie has US cult phenomenon Pee Wee Herman strutting his stuff (dog that outfit) and being hilariously silly in his attempts to retrieve his stolen red bicycle. Inspired lunacy for aficionados of camp comic relief. Released: March 17th £9.99

PRIME EVIL (16) SEEN

A sect of 13th Century monks surfaces in NYC (I've warned you about that subway system) and achieve immortality through a pact with Old Nick himself (or is it Dennis Wheatley?). It takes only one courageous (and pretty) nun to bring Good and Evil into direct conflict in this occult spoof. After buying a new habit - low budget - at Bloomingdale's, of course. Released: March ?

RAMBO - FIRST BLOOD PART II (15) PARKFIELD

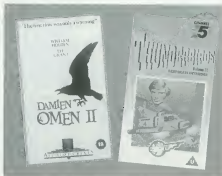
Our John off to Vietnam again to dig out American soldiers still held prisoners after all these years. Released: March 23rd £9.99

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS - 5, 6 (U) PARKFIELD

Two more exciting episodes - Ragwort and Bloodmunt - guaranteed to keep my five-year old nephew glued to the screen wearing all his Ghostbusters Christmas presents at once. Released: March 23rd £7.99

ROMANCING THE STONE (PG) CBS/FOX

You know what, Bob Zemeckis directed this whiz-bang all action romantic adventure, which went a long way to establishing Michael Douglas's claim to be The Sexiest Man On Earth. Released: February 3rd £9.99



THE SECRET OF NIMH (PG) WARNER

Don Bluth's animated fantasy about a widowed field mouse who seeks advice from a society of super-intelligent rats when her family home is threatened. However, Nimh - the National Institute for Marvellous Health - is using the same rats for experimental purposes. Marvellous moral tale, echoing Disney's Golden Era. Released: March 7th £9.99

SHADOW OF DEATH (18) SONY

You can't kill what refuses to die. Anthony Perkins as a film director (!) shooting in a prison where they think a mass murderer died but, er, they're not sure...I mean he could just be lurking somewhere in the forgotten depths of Cal (Black H). Electrifying! Released: March 20th

STAR TREK (PG) CIC

All you Trekkers, Trekkers and Trekkophiles get ready to thrust your glued-together fingers in your silver trex currency pouch! Another six episodes are up for grabs, roaming the galaxy in search of an antiquated television screen! Episodes #21 and #22 feature Tomorrow's Yesterday in which the Enterprise is flung back to the 20th Century and mistaken for a UFO by thicks Earthwinkles, and Return of the Archons in which Kirk & Co investigate the disappearance of the missing USS Archer. Episodes #23 and #24 contain A Taste of Armageddon (our heroes are sent to make diplomatic contact with a planet that's been at war for 500 years) and Space Seed in which Cap Kirk Kink unwittingly unleashes super power Khan. Episodes #25 and #26 feature a dog which causes Spock to fall in love! The Side of Paradise and The Devil in the Dark, in which Kirk also does something dirty with evil rock formations. The mind boggles - which is exactly what it's supposed to do, of course. Released: March 6th £9.99 each

STAR TREK - THE NEXT GENERATION VIII (U) CIC

Two further fabulous futuristic fables, 11001001 in which the Enterprise docks at Starbase 74 for the local Byrnes to repair damage. Instead the clastardly television housewife takes stardust and instead Picard and Ryker. In Coming Of Age Wesley beams down to Rialta 7 (to save the Starfleet Entrance Exam) as well of GGSE for space rebels. Does he graduate or flunk out? Marked down: April 7th

THE STORYTELLER - VOL 3 (U) CHANNEL 5

Two more tales featuring such delights as the unrelated Miranda and Joey Richardson and Jonathan Pryce. John Hurt, warts'n'all, relates The Three Ravens and The Heartless Giant dog-born by the firebird. Released: March 10th £9.99

THUNDERBOLTS 10 (U) CHANNEL 5

The latest volume of the ever-popular series in which The Wooden Tops Go All-Indian continues to line supercard Gerry Anderson's ever-deepening pockets. This time there are no strings attached to Copsacate Intruder and 30 Minutes After Noon. Released: March 10th £7.99

My old mate Harry Adam McKnight was, as usual, lying under his favourite table in his Soho drinking club. I'd dropped in to show Harry the letter about us from James Herbert published in issue 126 but this proved easier said than done. After I woke him up, with difficulty, he found it impossible to focus his eyes on the magazine so I was obliged to read to him aloud. Harry took it remarkably well, I thought, then he asked me who James Herbert was and I realised we were talking serious memory loss here. And when he asked me who I was I knew we were talking very serious memory loss...

But after downing several double scotches Harry began to synch in with reality (well, as close to reality Harry ever gets) and he at least remembered who I was, which was a start. I reminded him of our visit to the World Fantasy Convention and how he was thrown out of the hotel after shouting abuse during James Herbert's brilliant and rather moving speech about critics and money and stuff. "See this," I said, waving the copy of *Starburst* under Harry's red nose (it matches his eyes). "He more or less describes us as gutless drunkards!" Harry was incensed. "The fuck!" he cried. "He can't get away with that! I'm not going to take this lying down!" After I pointed out that lying down was exactly the way he was taking it Harry staggered gamely to his feet... well, to his knees actually, and cried, "He'll rue the day he took on Harry Adam Knight or my name isn't Harry, or Harry... er, Harry whatever it is..." Then his eyes glazed over and he slumped backwards. I left him snoring where I'd found him, wondering if James Herbert was yet aware of the terrible forces he'd unwittingly unleashed from the black bottomless pit of Harry's frightening psyche.

As for myself I was somewhat amused by Herbert's attack, proving as it did, if nothing else, that the rumour he had his sense of humour surgically removed at the age of ten was true. Ignoring his childish insults at Harry and me I want to examine his curious attitude towards criticism and critics which he makes clear in his letter. After using that hoary old ploy of saying he has 'many good friends who are critics' (yes, but would he want his daughter to marry one?) he goes on to say that 'there was a certain group of critics within the Horror genre itself (Brosnan will be the first to own up that he is one of them) for whom I can do nothing

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE

By John

Brosnan

right: no matter what the subject, whatever the style I use and (this in particular) no matter how popular. What bosh! If this mysterious group of critics does indeed exist - and I seriously doubt that it does - I'm certainly not a member. Besides, I've only ever reviewed three of Herbert's books, *The Magic Cottage*, *Sepulchre* and *The Haunted*, and only with the latter did I do a complete thumbs down job: the first two got quite favourable reviews, though I did say on both occasions that I wasn't a fan of his work.

And I'm not. Personally, I just don't think Herbert is a very good writer. That's it. My personal opinion and my professional opinion. I say that not because I have weird, pathological dislike of Herbert and his works and belong to an evil clique of anti-Herbert critics but because it's my honest

opinion. And as I don't think Herbert is a very good writer it stands to reason that I don't think he's a very good horror writer. I think he's improved tremendously as far as technique is concerned since he wrote *The Rats* which was little more than a number of crudely described rat attacks loosely strung together but even his most recent, more 'upmarket' books, while slickly written, show signs of narrative strain. I still get the feeling he's very much a mechanical writer who knows roughly how to put all the parts of a book together but can't breathe life into the result. He has certainly never engaged my emotions as a reader in the way that my favourite horror writers do (such as King, Ramsey Campbell, Clive Barker, John Farris, Stephen Gallagher and others). And even on the purely technical level he can still be pretty clunky at times. For

example, in *Sepulchre* he makes the stylistic mistake of continuing to interrupt the narrative flow in the second half of the novel, when the main story is really gathering steam, with irritating flashbacks dealing with the histories of the subsidiary characters.

Herbert seems to think a critic should rate his books by the level of possibly offensive material they contain. Thus his statement, "With *The Magic Cottage*... I felt (it) was so inoffensive that there had to be something wrong with anyone who actively disliked it (I did not make mention of any other book in this context because obviously many of them could easily be disliked)." Herbert reveals here a total misunderstanding of the critic's role. A critic is quite at liberty to say that he didn't like *The Magic Cottage* because he found it, say, embarrassingly twee and ineptly written. A critic is not obliged to like *The Magic Cottage* simply because it is inoffensive. Using this yardstick as the basis of literary criticism would mean that Barbara Cartland was a better writer than Shakespeare. I suspect that Herbert's extreme sensitivity to adverse criticism, and his idea that such criticism is somehow orchestrated by a specific group of pathologically anti-Herbert critics, reflects a basic insecurity he has about his own work - an insecurity which persists no matter how many best-sellers he has. But that's his problem, not mine.

A writer/director who knows no sign of insecurity is 27 year old Eric Red. Writer of *The Hitcher*, co-author (with director Kathryn Bigelow) of *Near Dark* and writer of the forthcoming thriller *Cohen and Tate*, he has been given the choice assignment of writing, and no doubt directing, *Aliens III* (or it might be *Alien III*). SF author William Gibson (*Neuromancer* etc) had already done two drafts of the *Aliens III* script but Red thinks they were 'terrible'. Said Red of Gibson's version: 'It was just a series of action sequences taken from the other two films. It had no characters and no story. Mine takes off on a completely new direction, with all new characters and a new concept for the aliens. It's kind of in the *North By Northwest* vein in that it's funny and exciting at the same time.' Nope, no sign of insecurity there at all, though I'm a little worried by the *North By Northwest* connection. I can see it now - Sigourney Weaver being chased through a cornfield by a crop-dusting plane piloted by an alien.

An Alien readying for an audition



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WAR OF THE WORLDS
A classic film, now a classic series?

DOCTOR WHO
Now on stage...

FRIGHT NIGHT II
Tommy Lee Wallace interviewed

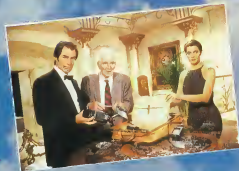
STAR TREK NEXT GENERATION

Published 20th April

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